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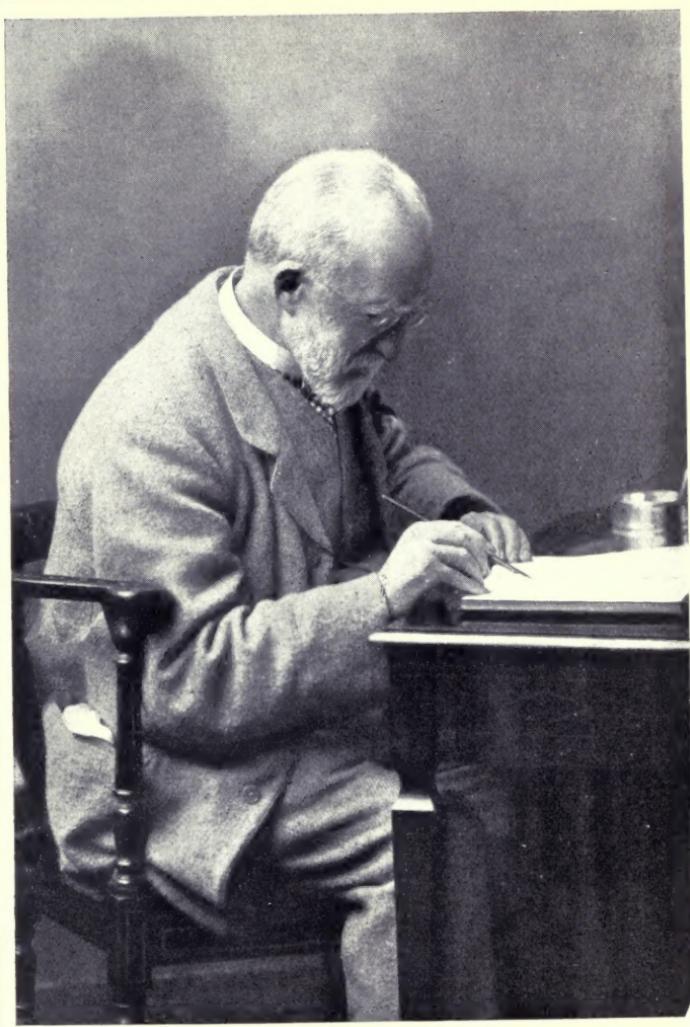
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IRISH RECOLLECTIONS



Photo]

[Lambert Weston, Folkesstone.

JUSTIN McCARTHY.

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IRISH RECOLLECTIONS

BY
JUSTIN McCARTHY

AUTHOR OF "A HISTORY OF OUR OWN TIMES"

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THE CITY OF SHANDON BELLS

CHAPTER I

THE CITY OF SHANDON BELLS

I HAVE long felt prompted by a desire to give shape and coherence to my early recollections of Ireland. I have already written a novel which has its scene laid in my native country, and have published a volume which describes, I hope at not too great length, the course of my life under the name of “The Story of an Irishman”; but my principal object in the present work is to retrace my recollections of Ireland in my early youth and my progress towards manhood, because I am convinced that a very great change has taken place in the ways, the habits, and the whole condition of my native country which makes the Ireland of the present very different from the Ireland of that not yet very far-off period.

Our early years, as we remember them, come back to us usually with a roseate tint upon them, but while I recognise that fact as most others do, I still feel that the Ireland of the present is growing more and more in advance of the Ireland as I saw it in my youth, and that my recollections, however distinctly set forth,

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cannot fail to show that the condition of my country at present is in every sense full of hope and of promise.

I was born in the City of Cork, a city surrounded by some of the most picturesque, poetic, and delightful regions to be found anywhere throughout the island. It is divided by the River Lee, and the Lee itself passes down through a district ornamented by beautiful, although not lofty hills and through exquisite plains, rich meadows, and delightful gardens, then streams through the city, and at last pours itself into the harbour of Queenstown, called in my early days the Cove of Cork, or more commonly by the abbreviated name of Cove, into the open sea.

The home which I remember best in Cork was made up of a small house with a garden running down to the edge of the river, and when one had closed the gate behind him he seemed to be removed entirely from the commonplace working-day world of business and traffic. He was standing at one end of a pretty garden with its little meadow, its fruit trees, and its abundant flowers, and just beneath him flowed the River Lee, there a narrow, rushing stream along whose opposite bank were meadows and trees, and in the farther background gently sloping hills.

When we lived in this quiet picturesque home my brother and I always kept our boat on the

river just in front of our garden. We could thus at any time get into the boat and row up the river in the direction from which it came, or we could go down the stream until we reached the city itself and pass through some of its central streets, and go on and on until we reached, after no fatiguing exercise of our strength as oarsmen, to where the open sea tossed and tumbled outside the limits of the harbour.

All around the city, indeed, were landscapes of colour and softness and beauty. It was no wonder if the boys and girls of Cork who were not kept too hard at work of any kind to be allowed a growing and general appreciation of the beauty of river and landscape and sea, became touched from their earliest time with a poetical and artistic perception of Nature's fascination.

The young people with whom I was best acquainted in those days were all great lovers of books, and especially, I need hardly say, of poetical works and of romances. Even among the poorer classes who came under my observation, there was a strong and almost a passionate love for music of any kind, and for ballad poetry. I have known working men who, when engaged at their daily work, could often be heard singing or whistling or murmuring airs familiar to us all, and to which Thomas Moore, then our national poet, had given some of his most famous verses. This was before the days when the Young Ireland

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movement had set in, and when the literature we most loved in prose and verse thrilled us with a passionate desire to see Ireland made once again an independent nation, free for ever from foreign rule.

My memory of the Cork with which I was acquainted in those far-distant days is that we were all poets or poetesses. All the young folks whom I knew were given to the writing of verses, and even our elders were not too sage and grave to indulge in the frequent production and publication of metrical effusions. Those of us who had to work for a living soon found themselves compelled to settle down to the literature of mere prose, and I am afraid I cannot say that any one of us succeeded in having his or her name inscribed on the roll of poetic fame.

I have seen many countries since those days of my youth in Cork City, but I have never been in any place where the love of literature was more warm, more sincere, and more general than in that community amid which I was brought up. I have sometimes felt tempted to describe my native city as another Weimar, but then I have always remembered that it had no Goethe and no Schiller, and that fact would certainly suggest to the minds of my listeners a considerable difference between the two towns. However, I venture on making the remark here, because it will in itself be to the credit of my Cork abode that

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anyone could even for a moment have thought of venturing on such a comparison.

All throughout Ireland now, as then, there may be found in its various towns and villages the same genuine devotion to literature, to music, painting, sculpture, and the drama which made itself so strikingly evident to me during my early days, and has ever been so since when I was fortunate enough to revisit the home of my growing years and of my early manhood.

During those years of my boyhood and youth in Ireland, Charles Lever was by far the most popular Irish novelist. His stories were everywhere welcomed as pictures of Irish life. They were welcomed not merely for their genuine humour, their unfailing vivacity, and their power of invention, but also for their faithful portraiture of typical Irish character. Yet I can well remember that while we boys and girls in our Cork set were enthusiastic admirers of "Charles O'Malley" and "Harry Lorrequer," we were frequently asking each other whether any of us had ever met with such personages as in Lever's novels were understood to be found in every Irish town and village. I am compelled to add that not one of us could say that he or she had ever met even one such person in the Irish life with which we were acquainted.

Now, I am not finding any fault with Lever as an author because of the humorous inventiveness

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and the humorous exaggeration which he brought into his comic illustrations of the poorer classes in Ireland. I am only anxious to dwell upon the fact that the Ireland, and especially the Irishmen of Lever's earlier novels, are no more to be taken as actual representations of typical Irishmen than are the characters in a vivacious pantomime to be looked upon as living illustrations of English social life.

Society in and around Cork, like most other cities, was made up of the landlord class, the professional classes, the merchants, some of the traders who carried on large and money-making operations, and then we come down to the shopkeepers and their assistants, and thus we come before long to the regions occupied by the poor and the unrecognised. The clergy of all denominations, the lawyers and the physicians mixed, of course, with all classes, and were to be found dining with the peer and the landlord, and also visiting, with kindly purpose, the garrets and the cabins of the poor.

The army and the navy were both very popular in Cork, and, indeed, throughout all Ireland in those days, and the navy was distinctly even more popular among the poorer classes than the army. I remember hearing more than once an inquiry which illustrated this predilection. I happened to hear some talk among working people or servants about an officer, and then the question

promptly put, “Is it a navy officer or only a soldier officer ?”

The people of Cork were essentially a sea-loving race, but they loved the army too—this was nearly half a century after the rebellion of 1798 and before any expectation of the rebellion of 1848. There was a magnificent pile of barracks on an eminence from which descended one of the most popular streets in the city, and the soldier was a favourite among the people, while the officer was welcomed as a guest in every house which had social pretensions.

My family and I had excellent opportunities of studying, if we were so inclined, the ways of all classes and sections into which the local population was divided. My father held the position of chief clerk to the local magistrates in their court, and he was, by virtue of his office, the adviser whom the magistrates daily consulted on any questions of difficulty suddenly coming up for their consideration. He was well known among the local barristers and solicitors, and was regarded as a public official whom everyone was expected to recognise. Thus I came to be well acquainted with representatives of the various sections of the Cork community from my early days.

I had one sister and one brother, my sister about a year older than I, and my brother three years my junior. We three were all brought up with something of culture in literature and art,

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and, as I have already said, Cork was a city much given to the reading of books, and to a love for painting, sculpture, and music.

The city had three newspapers—not, however, daily newspapers, for the provincial newspaper in Ireland, as well as in England, had not ventured upon a daily issue until many years after the time of which I am now writing. There was an excellent public library in Cork, and we had several libraries from which books were lent out at a very moderate rate of charge.

I was only a boy when Father Mathew began his great crusade against the use of alcoholic liquors. The great Apostle of Temperance, as he was justly called, lived in Cork City, and made it the citadel from which his crusade against intoxication set out on its unceasing enterprises. There can be no question as to the fact that drunkenness had then come to be the great evil of Irish life, especially among the poorer classes. Of course, just the same has to be said of life in Scotland and England and Wales, and it was not to the poorer classes in any of the four countries that the vice of frequent drunkenness was confined. The influence of Father Mathew unquestionably had a marvellous effect in creating a better order of things among all classes, and many of my seniors have told me that the change within their recollection was the opening of a new chapter in Irish social life.

Father Mathew devoted much of his time also to the promotion of a taste for the reading of books among even the poorest classes of the communities over which he was able to exercise some influence.

The City of Cork actually published at one time two literary periodicals, edited, written for, and printed in the city itself, one a quarterly review, modelled in form after the fashion of the London quarterly reviews, and a monthly magazine.

Cork had its local poets, but I do not believe that at that time it had yet developed a local novelist. One of the literary celebrities of the day was the Rev. Francis Mahony, a Cork man by birth, brought up in Paris as a priest of the Catholic Church, who afterwards settled in his native city and became, for a time, chaplain to a local hospital. Afterwards, as most of my readers already know, he removed to London, abandoned his clerical work, devoted himself altogether to literature and to writing for newspapers, and became famous under the literary nomenclature of Father Prout. His musical ballad, "The Bells of Shandon," made itself familiar wherever ballad music could appeal to the ears and to the hearts of listeners.

Father Mathew founded in Cork a temperance institute, which had a large reading-room provided with many books, and another room in

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which discussions took place on literary subjects, and essays were read which were themselves offered for the purpose of promoting such discussion. I well remember that it was in the reading-room of this institute I first saw the periodical numbers of Dickens's "Pickwick Papers," and these I read with thorough delight and genuine admiration. So far as I can now remember, the first time I ever saw the name of Charles Dickens was when my eyes first lighted on a number of the "Pickwick Papers" in the Temperance Institute.

All the sets of whom I knew anything in Cork, the elders as well as the youngsters, were lovers of poetry and of literature in prose, and we did not by any means confine our admiration to writers of our own nationality. We all adored Walter Scott; we most of us regarded Byron as even a greater poet than Thomas Moore, our own countryman, and we were among the most devoted admirers of Dickens, and of Thackeray when Thackeray, somewhat later, began to claim our attention.

We had two debating societies in Cork, at which essays on all manner of subjects, chiefly, however, literary and artistic, were read aloud by the authors, and were then discussed by the audience. One of these societies had been long established when I first began to notice the public institutions around me, while the other was established

much more lately as a sort of youthful rival to the older institution. The older institution was called, if I remember rightly, "The Cork Scientific and Literary Society," while on the younger was conferred by its founders the name of "The Cork Historical Society." I became a member of both institutions, for even in the older and more pretentious association youth was not considered a disqualification. In the Historical Society I was a frequent speaker, and my readers will not be surprised that we young fellows then began to form a very high opinion of our own capacity for argument and eloquence, for sarcasm and for repartee. Several of the young men who were habitual colleagues of mine in that debating society were at a much later date colleagues of mine in a more widely known and influential debating society which holds its sittings in Westminster Palace, London.

Irishmen have always been accredited with a passionate love of what is called sport, and especially of sport which carries with it the alternative of making or losing money as the result of victory or defeat. So far as I can judge, that passion has been increasing rather than diminishing during recent years. I am now, however, drawing mainly on my early recollections of that part of Ireland in which I lived. I am also drawing mainly on my recollections of the tastes and habits which prevailed

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among the younger men with whom I was habitually associated.

Our love of sport in those days found its principal enjoyment in exercises and rivalries which belonged to the river and the sea. We young men in and around Cork were passionate lovers of all contests in strength and skill, more especially contests of swimming and boating and yachting. We practised swimming from our early childhood. It does not seem to me as if we ever actually learned it by any teaching or training—it came upon us, grew with our growth, and strengthened with our strength. Once we were in the water, whether it were that of the river or the sea, we seemed to be in a natural element and never had to think about any possibility of our being drowned. To swim the Channel would have seemed to us only a question of being provided with sufficient food to keep us alive for the completion of the task.

I have already referred to the great influence exercised by Father Mathew in the promotion of sobriety among all classes in Ireland. Of course, where the vice of drunkenness prevailed, it was most detrimental in its effects upon the poor, but it was also prevalent and conspicuous among the classes who had money to spend and stately or comfortable homes to live in. The Irish landlord, the wealthy Irish manufacturer or trader, the men of the professional orders, the well-to-do

shopkeepers could drink too much every night of their lives and yet not bring their wives and families to penury and ruin. But when the poor peasant, the humble shop-assistant, the clerk with small weekly pay, indulged himself too much in the favourite drink, he was almost certain to bring himself and his family into utter poverty. The habit of drinking too much was, however, far more common among what are called the better classes of Ireland in my early days than among the very poor.

The whole condition of things has greatly changed from what it was at the time of which I am now writing, and I should like to give my readers some description of the social habits which were prevalent among the better classes, to use the familiar and descriptive phrase, in the years of my boyhood and early manhood.

The respectable citizen or county resident was not supposed to indulge his tastes for wine or whiskey during the greater part of the day. But at night it was quite understood that he might fully give way to his inclination for wine and spirits at dinner, and for as long after dinner as he and his guests felt disposed to keep up their convivial companionship. The ladies took no part whatever in exhausting the contents of what used then to be still described as "the flowing bowl." The flowing bowl in the days of Thomas Moore meant a bowl filled with wine,

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but during my earlier recollections it had come to be a bowl filled with hot whiskey and water—a punch-bowl, as a matter of fact. This bowl was not filled for the ladies, nor was it supposed that any lady desired to taste its contents. The ladies usually had a glass of wine or so at dinner, but the drinking of wines and spirits after dinner was confined altogether to the masculine revellers. Indeed, when the drinking set in the ladies always withdrew from the scene of revelry and went to another room to indulge in their favourite, and to them, exhilarating cups of tea. I should say that tea then constituted a regular and distinct meal, especially provided for the ladies.

Even with all the effect produced by Father Mathew's beneficent labours, it is quite certain that there still existed among the middle and upper classes of Irishmen an amount of drinking which is not to be found in any decent order of society at the present day. Nobody then professed to be in the least surprised if one of his companions at the dinner-table had brought himself into a condition of actual drunkenness before the banquet came to an end. If he made himself ridiculous his friends laughed at him, as they might have laughed if he fell down when skating, or met with some harmless accident on a hunting day, but they thought none the worse of him for his over-indulgence, and did



FATHER MATHEW.

not even believe themselves called upon or entitled to approach him next day with words of remonstrance and advice. An over-indulgence in drinking was regarded in much the same light as an over-indulgence in smoking—it might, indeed, be bad for the nerves and for the health, but did not seriously affect the man's general character.

The influence of Father Mathew's crusade against the use of alcoholic liquors had undoubtedly a rapid and even a wondrous effect in bringing about a better condition in the social habits of all classes in Ireland. Even at the worst period of over-indulgence in drink among the Irish people, high and low, the vice was almost wholly confined to the men, and very rarely showed itself among the women of any order. So far as my own recollections go, I should say also that the vice of drunkenness very seldom spread to the younger men of a family. The father might drink too much every day of his life after dinner, but it very seldom happened that the sons, while still young men, fell into the same habit.

My own early memories of Ireland only go so far on this particular subject as to enable me to realise the social habits of the Ireland which existed just before my time. I saw enough of that kind of social life to make me understand all that I had heard and read and was still

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reading about the social life of an earlier generation.

I feel on this subject very much as I feel on the subject of duelling. Even in the days of my early youth a duel had almost ceased to be an actual event in Ireland. I never knew of any duel taking place during that time. But I had heard of many duels being fought not long before, and I was personally acquainted with many elders who had themselves fought duels, and even with some who had given a death-wound to their opponents. Many of these elder friends of mine often expressed an earnest regret that the duel was passing out of fashion, and was likely soon to be entirely unknown in Great Britain and Ireland. Their argument was that there were sins and offences against the code of chivalry and honour in private life which could only be resisted and kept down by the practice of the duel. There were offences, it was urged, offences of slanderous insinuation, of reckless misrepresentation, of insolent obtrusiveness, which could hardly be checked, not to say suppressed, by any legal proceedings or any appeals to police protection, and were only to be fairly and effectively encountered by a challenge and a duel.

Many of my elder friends, grey and reverend seigneurs in my time, were much pleased to give long and vivid accounts of duels which they had themselves fought for the humiliation

and the punishment of such offenders, and they did not appear to have any feeling of regret, or indeed of repentance, when the offenders had paid the penalty with their lives. Therefore, although I did not live in the days when the duel was still a recognised and a flourishing institution, yet at least I came near enough to that era to have a thorough knowledge of its characteristics.

The duel, of course, still holds its place in the social life of many foreign countries, but it has passed away as completely from the British Islands as the public flogging of males and females in the prison discipline of our communities. We still seem to be all the world over as far away from that era of universal peace, which so many true and noble-hearted advocates have always been endeavouring to bring about, as we were at any distant time. We have seen during recent years some wars as unnecessary, as unjustifiable, and as futile for any great and good purpose as could have been looked upon by our far-off ancestors. It is something to know that, at least in these countries, the duel has passed out of practice and must, before long, have passed out of any living memory.

My early recollections of Ireland do not carry with them any vivid picture of that fierce struggle between landlord and tenant, which grew to

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desperation during the later days and is only now at last drawing, I hope and believe, to a happy close. The principal reason for the absence of this struggle during my youthful time was merely that the Irish occupier had not yet learned the fact that he was the mere slave and vassal of his landlord, and never suspected that he was not governed under an enlightened and just system of rule.

I lived, indeed, through the days of the Irish rebellion of 1848, a rebellion which had not the slightest chance of success, and was held by many at the time to be on that account alone altogether inexcusable. But I also lived through the period of the great Irish famine, and I could not help seeing, young as I then was, how the spread of that famine was promoted by the persistent adherence of the Government and its functionaries to what they assumed to be the orthodox rules of political economy. Any intelligent student of history would have found ample justification for a national uprising in Ireland against the then existing system of British rule over the island, and would have admitted that insurrection after insurrection could claim its justification while such a system of rule continued to exist.

The manner in which Ireland was then governed would seem to many a reader of the present day a system entirely out of

keeping with the common principles of humanity and justice. The great majority of Ireland's population was made up of men and women who belonged, as their forefathers had belonged, to the Catholic Church, and even within my own recollection the system by which Ireland was governed still denied to the Irish Catholic many of the essential rights of citizenship which were enjoyed by his Protestant fellow-countrymen.

I am not now looking back to the days, not very far distant, when Ireland was held in subjection by a system of mere tyranny which drove Irish Protestants like Lord Edward Fitzgerald and Wolfe Tone and many others into armed rebellion against the British Government in Ireland. It has also to be remarked that the leading spirits in the rebellion of 1848 belonged to the physical frames of Protestants like William Smith O'Brien, a member of the aristocracy, and John Mitchel.

The actual truth is that the Irish people suffered patiently and peacefully a system of rule which it would have been impossible to enforce on most other European nationalities. More than that, it is quite certain that the whole English public would have cheered with plaudits of genuine and demonstrative sympathy the attempt of any nation on the European continent to free itself by the most

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desperate effort at rebellion from such a rule as that same English public apparently believed to be actually necessary for keeping those troublesome Irish under the dominion of England.

John Bright, that true-hearted English patriot, but also most sincere advocate of equal rule for all nationalities and classes under English dominion, was opposed to the principle of Home Rule for Ireland only because he was not in favour of separate parliaments under the same Crown. He declared that the only remedy for the grievances and the natural discontent of the Irish people would have been to allow Ireland to make for herself such a system of laws as she would have set up if she had accomplished a successful revolution.

Now, I am myself, as my readers probably know, a convinced supporter of Home Rule for Ireland, because I believe the Irish people best understand how their own country could be made prosperous and happy, and that no stranger rule, however well-intentioned, could accomplish such a work so well. We have seen that Canada, which was always in rebellion against English dominion up to the days of the great Lord Durham, has, ever since it attained, through his beneficent power, a domestic government, been one of the most prosperous, peaceful, and truly loyal divisions of the British Empire.

At present my main purpose is to impress upon my readers the fact that Ireland, so far from being always a turbulent, impatient, and rebellious country, had, on the contrary, endured with marvellous patience a system of rule which most civilised peoples would have regarded as beyond endurance. However, we are sure to have Home Rule before long, whatever British Ministries may be in power, and then we shall find that Ireland will prove one of the most peaceful, prosperous, and progressive divisions of the whole empire. The time was long out of joint, but men were born both here and in Great Britain to set it right.

THE WAYS OF CORK CITY

CHAPTER II

THE WAYS OF CORK CITY

SOCIETY in Cork, and in most other Irish cities, was at the time which I am now describing, divided mainly into two classes. When I speak of society I mean the aristocracy, the wealthy families, the professional classes, and those among the traders and shopkeepers who were able to give dinner-parties and evening parties, and to imitate after their fashion the ways of the higher orders. A further division of this higher order into two classes has nothing to do with religion or politics or social ranks, but was a division between those who regarded and proclaimed themselves as Irish, and those who went in for being especially English.

These English ladies and gentlemen had been most or all of them actually born and brought up in Ireland, and, indeed, with rare exceptions, had had fathers and grandfathers and great-grandfathers whom we all knew to have had a similar doom. But their living descendants always laid great stress upon the fact that their families had been born and resident in England until the stroke of fate came about which compelled them

to remove to Ireland and leave their descendants to abide in that inferior island.

I have heard many and many of these English folks in Ireland describe the difficulty which they found in settling fully down to Hibernian manners because of the difference between “our English ways” and the ways of folks in Ireland. If a family belonging to this class had an opportunity of spending a few weeks’ holiday in England, they returned to their Irish homes with an increased sense of superiority over the natives of the Emerald Isle, and an enhanced sense of the difficulty they found in adapting their English ways to the *habitudes* prevailing in the land of their exile.

My family, I need hardly say, were absolutely Irish. If any of them had ever been inclined, which, so far as I know, not one of them ever was, to claim a British descent, his family name would have rendered such a claim impossible of assertion.

Now I am not disposed to make too much of this peculiarity among the minority, the small minority, of the residents in Ireland who were thus persistent in asserting their claims to be regarded as importations from England. But the existence and the assertion of such claims was matter of much amusement and satirical comment among those of us who were Irish and not ashamed. It is a curious fact also, that there

were in the City of Cork a large number of residents whose very names announced that they were not Hibernian in origin, and who were, nevertheless, thoroughly Irish in their sentiments and their characteristic qualities, who loved the land in which they were living, and sympathised with and took part in Irish efforts for the maintenance of Ireland's nationality and her struggle for the restoration of Ireland's self-government. These families, foreign families they might almost be called, were mostly of dissenting creeds, many of them Unitarians, who had for one reason or another been compelled to make Ireland their home, and had grown to love the country and the people, and had become, if I may use a once familiar expression, more Irish than the Irish themselves.

The peculiarity of the class who affected English ways and set up for exiled Englishmen was especially evident throughout the southern and the midland counties of Ireland. In the north of the island there was little or no occasion for any such affectation, since the majority of the inhabitants were unquestionably of English or Scottish descent and were for the most part sincerely and avowedly opposed to all efforts for the maintenance or the restoration of Ireland's nationality. But in the midland and the southern districts the claim of Irish to be English was for the most part a mere affectation, assumed

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because it was supposed that to be English was genteel and to be Irish was to be outside the Pale.

Therefore some of our genteel folks in Cork started a code of gentility much more rigid in its exclusiveness, I fancy, than any code of social manners acknowledged then in England. For instance, there were certain cliques of Cork citizens who held that it would not be becoming to admit to social intimacy any personages belonging to the shopkeeper class. Society was composed, according to this creed, of the county nobles and other landlords, of the city magnates, the men of large means and fine houses, and the members of the learned professions, and, of course, the naval and military officers. But society had nothing to do with any persons, however well conducted and otherwise respectable, who belonged to the shopkeeping class.

I had an amusing experience of this kind myself which impressed me much at the time, and seemed to me a very typical illustration of this code of gentility. It was then a custom in Cork, as in most other cities, to get up at certain periods in the year large public balls for the benefit of some local charity, and these balls in Cork were usually held in one of the two great hotels which then accommodated our frequent visitors. The owner of the hotel at which such a ball took place was expected to act as a kind of master of the cere-

monies and see that the invited guests were received at the doors and introduced to their places.

On one occasion I received a ticket of invitation to such a ball, but the ball was to take place on a night when I could not possibly be present, and as there was not much time for rearrangement, I thought I had better hand over the ticket to a young friend of mine in the city. This young friend was the only son of a very respectable man who kept a large fruit shop in one of the principal streets of Cork, and one of whose daughters had begun to win for herself a certain distinction as a musician and a singer. I remember well that many of us young fellows in Cork were fully convinced at the time that this daughter of music was destined to attain to both fame and fortune on the operatic stage. The ticket which had been sent to me did not bear my name on it, and was in this fact like any ticket of admission to a theatre. It never occurred to me that there could be any reason why I should not hand it over to my friend, seeing that I was unable to make use of it myself. I gave it to him, therefore, and he went to the hotel, and was met in the hall by the proprietor and manager. What happened then I shall narrate in the words of my friend, which made a distinct impression on my mind. When he saw the proprietor, whom he knew quite well by sight,

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he addressed him in what he supposed to be a jocular and friendly style.

“ You see, Mr. Blank ”—I omit the name—“ I have come here for a hop.”

“ You must hop off out of this, my good fellow,” the proprietor scornfully answered, tearing the ticket in pieces; “ we are not in the habit of allowing shopkeepers to take part in our balls.”

My young friend had to leave the building and to go back to his home, but some of us took good care that the story should become well known through the City of Cork.

Now, I do not suppose that this highly respectable hotel-keeper would have acknowledged, or was even distinctly conscious, that the main reason why he objected to the presence of my friend at the ball was not because he was the son of a shopkeeper, but because, in addition to that damaging fact, he bore a distinctly Hibernian surname. I feel perfectly certain that but for such proclamation of Hibernian ancestry my friend would never have been thus refused admission. At such an entertainment there was sure to be some pretentious shopkeepers not only admitted but even made welcome. The final disqualification for my friend and representative was that he not merely belonged to a shopkeeping family, but to an Irish shopkeeping family.

There used to be a popular national ballad in



(From Grogan.)

(Drawn by John Fitzgerald, Cork.)

NIKE-THORNE BRIDGE, AND THE CITY GAOL, DUBLIN, 1791.

those days, denouncing “The Anti-Irish Irishman,” but the self-chosen representatives of English ways with whom I was and am now chiefly concerned were not actually anti-Irish, but only claimed for themselves the distinction of a higher order of gentility than the mere Irish could claim, or even seemed anxious to claim. When some of us, the mere Irish, paid an occasional visit to London, we were generally both surprised and pleased to find that among the English themselves there seemed to be no assumption whatever of any superior gentility on their part, but that they were quite willing to make friends with us, without any hesitation because of our nationality.

For most of my contemporaries in Ireland, young men and young women alike, London was a place which we especially longed to see and to know. It was for us the centre, the Mecca, of that literature and art which we loved so much and had endeavoured to study. We longed to wander through its streets and its parks and to look upon its historic structures.

It was said, not long ago, in disparagement of a very prominent public man in England, and, of course, in disparagement of his literary culture, that for him “literature was Dickens.” Now, I could not possibly admit that for us young men and women of Cork Dickens was by any means our sole literature. But most

assuredly Dickens was a great favourite amongst us ; we associated his characters with streets in London, and when we had the good fortune to find an opportunity of walking in those streets, we found ourselves in momentary companionship with this or that figure from one of the much-admired novels. I can well remember that during my first visit to London the streets and the buildings which I was most eager to see and study were not those which carried with them great historical associations, but rather those which the poet and the novelist had illuminated by the light of his genius.

I make these comments here because I am anxious to impress upon the minds of my readers that we, the young Nationalists of Ireland in those days, were as ardent admirers of England's literature, ancient and modern, as the most enthusiastic Englishman could be. The shelves of our little libraries—I mean the shelves which we kept stocked in our homes—held copies of Chaucer, Spenser, as well as Shakespeare, of Ben Jonson and Samuel Johnson, of Byron, of Macaulay, of Dickens and Thackeray. If a new novelist suddenly made a hit in London our immediate anxiety was to get a copy of the new novel, and to read the work and interchange our ideas about it as quickly as possible. Even when the Young Ireland movement was stirring up the Irish youth of the whole country it did not inter-

fere in the least with our devotion to the loved literature of the tyrant Saxon.

We were great lovers of the theatre, and there were many of our elders in Cork whom we young fellows envied very much because they could tell us with pride of the opportunities they had had, even in Irish cities, of seeing and admiring the great performances of Edmund Kean. I was an enthusiast for the theatre from my earliest boyhood, and I had especial opportunities of indulging my taste for the drama without any cost to my parents.

There were then two theatres in Cork, and the managers of both looked upon my father as a public official who had a right to their attention, and authorised him to obtain free admissions for himself and for me to the best seats vacant in the house at any time when we sought admission. I need hardly say with what envy I was regarded by most of my school-fellows and other young companions because of my possession of this, as it might well be called in either sense, priceless advantage. I am afraid that I got into the way of making the most of this privilege when talking with my young friends, and never failed to let them know, as if quite casually, when the newspapers and the public were filled with raptures about some new play, that I had seen it on its first night's performance.

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In the Cork theatre the most demonstrative part of the audience was, as might well be expected, that which had its position in the gallery. The occupants of the gallery were very quick to detect any defect in an actor or actress, even where these defects were nothing more serious than supposed mistakes in pronunciation.

The gallery on one occasion got a happy chance of which it made frequent use during several successive years. The actor who gave this opportunity was no less a personage than the manager of the theatre, who was himself performing on this evening the part of Othello. It may be observed that although the manager of the theatre was popular in many ways, there was yet a general impression among the occupants of the gallery, and, indeed, probably also of the pit and boxes—this theatre did not in my youthful days rise to the dignity of stalls—that the manager was somewhat too much inclined to assume for himself the leading part in any of Shakespeare's great dramas. There was a legend still going in my early days that on the first occasion when the manager aspired to the actual public representation of Othello, he gave to his critics in the gallery an unexpected and inestimable advantage. The manager had to deliver the impressive words, "When I love thee not chaos is come again," and he pronounced the word chaos as if it were "chouce," the "ch"

being pronounced as if the letters were the opening of chariot and not of chaos. The gallery shouted with laughter, yelled forth incessant repetitions of the word "chouee," and the boxes and pit, though not so noisily demonstrative, could not help sharing in the outburst of laughter.

The story does not end there. For years after the unlucky manager, who had long corrected his mistake in pronunciation, was frequently welcomed by the gallery with shouts of "Bravo, Chouce," whenever he seemed to deserve applause, and cries of "No, no, Chouce," if, as occasionally happened, his elocution seemed to call for an expression of disapproval. The original story only reached me as a legend of the past, but I can positively affirm that many and many a time I have heard that same manager in the Cork theatre hailed from the gallery by the familiar name of "Chouce."

This is an appropriate place in which to take some account of a very interesting little volume, entitled "The Random Recollections of an Old Play-Goer," a sketch of some old Cork theatres, by my friend Mr. J. W. Flynn, printed and published by Guy & Co., of Cork, in 1890. The book has been lately given to me by its author, and it contains many recollections especially interesting to me. It contains, indeed, my own anecdote about "Chouce," and deals with the

characteristics and the fortunes of many other actors, some already long known to universal dramatic celebrity, who were born in Ireland but won a name and fame in England, in the United States, and wherever the drama is performed in the English language.

We in Cork were passionate admirers of the drama and of the best actors and actresses, in whatever path of the profession these artists might move. I am quite ready to admit, however, that an especially warm glow animated our enthusiasm when the artist happened to be of Irish birth. Thus we did our very best to proclaim the late Barry Sullivan as the equal of Macready, even while many of us doubted much in our own minds whether that equality could be conscientiously maintained. We had less mental scruple about the late Gustavus Brooke, also an Irishman, because his magnificent presence, his marvellous voice, and his splendid theatrical attitudes made it impossible for us to bring ourselves down to any deliberate and impartial comparison of his merits with those of English actors to whom British opinion accorded a higher place.

Mr. Flynn, I must say, goes a good deal beyond me in his admiration of Brooke. "He was the noblest figure I ever saw on the stage, and I think I may honestly say—

" 'Take him for all in all, I shall not look upon his like again.' When Brooke took the stage he



GUSTAVUS VAUGHAN BROOKE.

seemed, by his magnificent physique, to dwarf everyone else in the scene. He was verily the 'glass of fashion, and the mould of form' amongst actors. To see him in classic garb, one might fancy that some Greek statue had stepped from its pedestal. He had large, expressive eyes, a voice rich and musical in the highest degree, a graceful carriage, and his gestures were always free, open, and graceful."

Thus Mr. Flynn tells us of the tragic manner in which the brilliant tragedian closed his life.

" You know the sad story of his tragic death, how, when he was on his way to Australia in the steamship 'London,' that vessel foundered in the Bay of Biscay, and how Brooke nobly perished, leaving to others the place he might have taken among the survivors in the boats. There were women on board, and men and women in the boats. ' Better death than dishonour,' were the words he uttered as he faced his doom in the sinking ship. It was a death worthy of such a man. Many actors have come and gone since then—I have seen the best of them ; I have enjoyed their acting—but for none of them have I felt a spark of the deep regard and admiration I felt for that rare genius, Gustavus-Vaughan Brooke."

The little volume has many delightful passages which must be welcome to all readers who take an interest in the drama of the past or the present.

We were naturally devotees of the opera, for the love of music seems to belong to the very heart of Irish nature, but at that time the comic opera had not come into vogue, even in England, and I do not know whether, even in its highest form, it would have been very popular with us enthusiasts. The ballet did not meet with much encouragement in Irish theatres. There was a general impression, at least among parents and guardians, that the dresses of the women revealed a good deal too much of what an American lady would at that time have called "the lower limbs."

There was not in the south of Ireland at that time, so far as I could see, much interest taken, even by young men, in pugilistic contests regarded as a means of making money. The men, old and young, could well understand the fascinations of a free fight as a means of settling a local or personal quarrel, or as a means of testing rival strength and skill, but the fighting for money did not appeal to our national inclinations. We were most of us rather too romantic, we at least of the younger generation, to feel any sympathy with the practice which perverted the interest of the spectators in a combat, and degraded it into a mere anxiety for the winning of some coins by the success of our chosen combatant. Horse-racing was, indeed, a most favourite sport in my native county, where we all,

men, women, and children, were lovers of horses, but we, the young men at all events, cared only about the contest and the victory, and took no interest whatever in the amount of money which might be won by those who had backed the winner.

The love of animals has always been a prevailing emotion among Irish people, and nothing could arouse us young people to greater indignation than an account of wanton suffering inflicted upon a horse or a dog or a cat, and we could not even work up much sympathy always with the heroes of narratives which told us of slaughtered lions and tigers. As for the Spanish bull-fight, we regarded it with utter detestation and horror, and could not understand how a people like the Spaniards could bring themselves to regard such a performance as a sort of national festival.

Among the Nationalist population of Ireland there had always been much sympathy and admiration felt for the Spanish people. "The Shamrock of Erin, the Olive of Spain," had been coupled in verse by our national poet, Thomas Moore, and there were many passages in Byron's poems which stimulated our regard for Spain. Therefore we were all the more astonished to find that a people like the Spaniards could patronise and applaud the bull-fight, and even recognise it as a national institution. Many

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years after, when I had become a middle-aged personage, I saw for the first and last time a Spanish bull-fight at Madrid, and I must say that my early horrors at the existence of such a form of sport among a civilised and Christian population were much more increased than diminished by the sights which I looked upon that bright and beautiful day of early autumn in Spain.

When Sir Walter Scott visited Cork the magistrates of the city resolved to present him with an address of welcome, expressing their appreciation of his genius, and assuring him that that appreciation represented not only the feeling of Cork City, but the national feeling of all Ireland. The recording of that fact impels, and I might even say compels, me to introduce among my life's earlier recollections one other recollection, drawn from a much more advanced period of that life's record.

Many years after, when I was still a comparatively young man, but had been for some time a married man, I went with my young wife on a visit to Scotland. Among many other places of interest which we visited was, of course, Abbotsford, made famous to all generations as the home of Sir Walter Scott. We were allowed to visit his library, and there, on a great writing-table which contained many memorials of the illustrious author, we actually came by pure chance on the



OLD BLACKROCK CASTLE AND ADMIRALTY COURT, CORK, IRELAND.

(From a painting by Samuel Lovell.)

elaborate and ornamentally arrayed copy of the address which had been presented to Sir Walter by the magistrates of Cork, and which, as I well knew, had been written by my father, and bore his name as the Chief Clerk to the local justices.

I need not attempt to describe the emotion which was called up to my mind, and to that of my wife, by this unexpected association, not only of my city, but of my family name, with the fame of Scotland's great poet, and still greater prose-romancist, whose novels had been the delight of our youth, and even of our childhood, must continue to be the delight of our whole lives, and must rank for ever among the world's great literary possessions. We became sincerely thankful to those local justices of Cork City who made themselves thus conspicuous in rendering their homage to the Wizard of the North, and I only regret that I cannot make any attempt to inscribe their names, as it were, on the pedestal of his statue. That was the first of my many, many visits to Scotland, and must ever live in my recollection.

I was wandering, one fine evening of early summer, in the neighbourhood of what was then called the Cove of Cork, and which has since become Queenstown. I was smoking a cigar, and much enjoying the sea-view and the smoke, for I had but lately taken to the use of tobacco. Presently a sailor, who appeared by his " rig " to have

come from one of the war-vessels in the harbour, approached me, and asked me if I would oblige him with a light for his pipe. I have to mention here that even in those early days I was very short-sighted, and had been accustomed to use an eye-glass which I held always fixed by muscular attachment in one eye. Of course, I readily produced my match-box and complied with his reasonable request. The sailor thanked me cordially, and then added, "Do you know, sir, I was afraid at first, when I noticed your eye-glass, that you might be a self-conceited young puppy who would look down upon a poor sailor, but now I know that I was mistaken, and I think a young gentleman like you, sir, must be fond of poetry, and would be pleased to know that long ago I got a light for this very pipe from Lord Byron, near Athens. I asked him just as I asked you, and he did me the favour just as you did."

I was gratified to hear that any manner of resemblance could be traced between Lord Byron and me, and in any case was delighted to be brought into conversation with one who had spoken to Lord Byron, and spoken to him near Athens. This casual meeting with the man-of-war's man in the port near my native city was brought back vividly to my mind many years later, when I was enjoying a delightful visit to Athens, and was studying every place

in the city and its surrounding shores which had any direct association with Byron, and the sailor seemed, indeed, to form a sort of living connection between the life of England's great modern poet and that of his humble Irish admirer.

The name of Byron comes into natural and easy association with the name of Thomas Moore, and in this particular instance brings me back to my own land, of which I am now engaged in recounting, after very indiscriminate fashion, my early memories. I have no personal recollections of Thomas Moore, and never even saw him, but my father had met him several times, and had told me much about those meetings.

There comes to my recollection just now an odd experience which has to do with one of Moore's melodies. In my early days it used to be a very common practice then in Ireland to vary the proceedings of a political meeting at night by some songs with musical accompaniment, the singer being sometimes found among those who had delivered, or were to deliver, speeches at the meeting. Once, when I was quite a boy, I was present at a gathering of this kind, during the course of which a distinguished local public man who had already delivered his speech was kind enough to favour the company with Moore's delightful ballad which opens with the lines :

“As slow our ship her foamy track,
Against the wind was cleaving.”

The singer gave it with admirable modulation and expression. Later, as my companions and I were quietly leaving the hall by a side entrance, a man of the farmer class who was known to some of us accosted us, and said in a rich southern brogue, “ Ah ! thin tell me what was the name of that lovely song about the slow ould ship ! ” We did not pause to explain to our inquirer that the emotions which the song was intended to express had nothing whatever to do with any supposed antiquity attaching to the vessel cleaving her way against the wind.

A mistake of even more humorous absurdity was made on another occasion in my hearing by one who professed only admiration for a singer and a song. A friend of mine had been delighting the company with the famous Irish ballad, “ The Battle Eve of the Brigade.” He sang the opening lines with great effect :

“ The mess-tent is full and the glasses are set,
And the gallant Count Thomond is president yet.”

The singer pronounced the name of the gallant Count quite correctly. Later in the evening I heard one of those assembled at the meeting say to a companion of his, “ What a splendid song that is, that song about the mess-tent being full and the gallant Con Twomey.”

On another occasion I happened to be a listener when an Irish coach-driver, without the faintest

notion of giving offence, shocked and startled two English ladies by answering a very natural question with a very direct and natural reply. I was then a youth of some eighteen years, and was travelling to Killarney on the roof of one of the mail-coaches which at that time constituted the main machinery of travel. On the roof of the coach near me, just behind the driver, sat two ladies, one elderly and one young, whom I knew by their accents to be English, and whom I assumed to be mother and daughter. It was quite common then for ladies, when travelling in summer weather, to take their seats, if they felt so disposed, on the roof of a coach. At a turn in the road we saw our horizon bounded by two mountains standing side by side and of about equal height and proportion, a very beautiful prospect indeed. The elder lady asked the coachman the name of these mountains. He turned round to her, and with a gleam of national pride sparkling in his eyes, he answered, "Oh ! sure, my lady, them there are the famous Paps of Kerry !" The elder lady was perfectly shocked at what she evidently regarded as the indecency of the poor coachman's anatomical classification when he described the famous peaks by the only name he had ever heard given to them.

It is perhaps hardly necessary to tell my readers that the City of Cork and its neighbouring harbour and shores were ever kept well in touch with

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the physical characteristics, the ways, the accents, and the customs of many foreign peoples.

There are inland towns of Great Britain where, even up to the present day, the sudden appearance of a group of foreigners would be likely to create a sensation of much surprise, and even of perturbation. In the streets of my native city, however, the sight of a group made up of "stubborn Turks or Tartars never used to offices of tender courtesy," would not in my boyish years have been likely to create the slightest astonishment or alarm. We knew that even foreigners carrying weapons did not necessarily carry them with the object of dealing destruction on us native inhabitants, many or most of whom were deprived by successive Acts of Parliament from carrying a weapon of defence.

But on the other hand, it is certain that there was one element in the foreign invasion which was especially unwelcome to the large majority of the Cork people. This was the intrusion of a number of women belonging to a disreputable class who came into Queenstown and thence into Cork from various continental cities, setting out in quest of lucrative adventures throughout the great cities of the United States, and had no intention of making prolonged residence in Cork, but their presence there even for a brief sojourn was highly offensive to the inhabitants of the city. Cork was a city especially pleasure-loving in its way,

fond of amusements, delighting in music and pictures, in theatres and in dances, in horse-racing and in games of skill, but was on the whole a city with a love for morality and therefore disinclined to put up with the sort of intrusion I have described. One remarkable illustration of this feeling may, I think, be appropriately brought in here.

The Grand Parade is, and has always been in my recollection, one of the finest and most fashionable streets in Cork City. At the time about which I am now writing it had hardly any shops, but was made up almost altogether of fine and handsome private residences. The Grand Parade at its lower end had the River Lee for its border, and the pedestrian could stand upon a narrow pathway at that end and gaze over an iron railing upon the beautiful stream beneath.

The street had always been regarded as the chosen home of local respectability, and, indeed, of fashion, for some fashionable residents found it convenient to live within the actual city. Suddenly a wild rumour went through that region to the effect that at the lower end of the street, and on the side where there were no shops and no business houses of any kind, there had been started a mansion of a peculiar order, what would have been called in the slang of a later day a "flash" house, in which several women,

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belonging to an order not recognised in decent society, had established themselves and were preparing to carry on their unhallowed trade.

This piece of news spread consternation through the city. It was well known that there were houses of that character in certain quarters of Cork, but these were quarters of the lowest order, where drinking-shops abounded and where decent persons seldom set their feet, especially at night-time. But the idea of such an institution establishing itself on the Grand Parade was something too much for human endurance. The house was watched, but it was not easy to discover any distinct evidences of disorder. Some local clergymen of the then Established Church and some of the Catholic Church made inquiries and found that the present occupant of the house was a foreign lady, who had living with her some other ladies who had but lately arrived in Ireland, and who were gracefully described by the tenant of the building as artists studying to be painters or to find a place on the stage. Application was made to the owner of the house, but he assured all inquirers that he had accepted as authentic the statements made to him by the present occupant, that he had let the house to her for twelve months at least, and that he knew of no reason for breaking through his agreement.

The local magistrates and the police authorities did not see how they could interfere under such

conditions. Still, the residents of that quarter were not satisfied. They observed that the house was visited late of evenings, and every evening, by male visitors, some of them foreigners, but others undoubtedly belonging to the city itself. Then there was formed by the residents something which might have been described as a committee of safety to keep close watch on the place with the object of arriving at conclusive evidence. These observers soon became satisfied in their own minds that the house was really what the worst suspicions had assumed it to be, and that it was frequently visited by young men and middle-aged men belonging to the city and county who, as the committee of safety thought, might have been expected to know better.

Still, there was no evidence to justify police interference, and then there came to the minds of the committee what might very appropriately have been called a bright idea. That part of the street was not well lighted, and seemed almost quite dark as the evening faded into night. So they organised a plan of their own for removing the veil of darkness from those late visitors at the mansion. They appointed three stalwart men, bearing torches, who paraded up and down that part of the street every night, and thus illumined the persons of all visitors as they entered and departed from the house. This illumination was kept up all through the night,

new watchers being supplied at intervals, and it was soon made apparent that many of the visitors did not take their leave until the early morning. Crowds of observers gathered every night and studied the persons of those who entered and departed from the building. The immediate result of this condition of things was that the visitors who belonged to the neighbourhood began to discontinue their visits, and even the foreigners did not care to expose themselves to the eyes of crowds of observers. The business of the house became a total failure, and one fine morning the owner of the building received from the police the news that the occupant and her female companions had disappeared from the place altogether, no one quite knew whither they had gone, and left the house on his hands again.

The whole affair created a great sensation at the time, but the plan of the committee of safety had proved a complete success, and no attempt was ever made again to set up such an infamy on the stately Grand Parade. Even in the poorest and meanest quarters of the city there never were such sights to be seen as might have been looked upon at that time and for many years after in the immediate vicinity of Regent Street and of the Strand in London. I do not mean to say that Cork had not her homes and quarters of female prostitution, but I do mean to say that

the common feeling of the public compelled these places to be sequestered, if I may put it so, in realms of darkness, or at least well out of the public view, and the stranger in Cork might walk, night after night, through some of the most populous quarters of the city and not find himself beset by the importunate intrusions and demands which would have been made upon him in most of the cities of England, at that time or now.



IRISH MIND AND HEART

CHAPTER III

IRISH MIND AND HEART

DURING my early days the State did nothing whatever for the education of the Irish people, except for those, very few in number, who professed the religion of the Established Church. The Catholics were left to find education for themselves or to do without it. The University of Dublin, to which Trinity College belonged, was not merely conducted for the sole benefit of Protestants, but was actually closed against all sincere Catholics who openly proclaimed their faith. Everything was done to put difficulties in the way of young men who were anxious to enter one of the learned professions, and especially in the way of those who desired to become members of the Bar. There was, of course, no proclaimed exclusion by law of Catholics from admission to the Bar, but the expenses of Protestant students who desired to enter the profession were made much more easy and more gradual in their course of payment than the terms allowed to Catholic students.

In plain words, everything was done openly and avowedly on the part of the State to keep the

Catholic population of the country in a condition of ignorance. The poorer classes were, in fact, dependent wholly for the benefits of education on the systems and schools of teaching established by the priests and monks in the cities and counties. There were in every considerable town several monastery schools, as they were called, where the sons of the very poorest could obtain an excellent education, while the convents of the nuns and Sisters of Charity had their schools for the instruction of girls. Of course, the classes who could afford to pay for the education of their children had no difficulty in finding capable and accomplished scholars who made the instruction of the young their business in life.

I have never seen in any part of the world with which I afterwards became acquainted any better seminaries for the education of the young than were some of those of which I had intimate knowledge during my lifetime in Ireland. Even throughout the most poorly populated or the most nearly depopulated districts of the country there was always some means of education thus beneficently provided for all who could find time to give any thought to the subject. But with all this the State had nothing to do, unless where, as was often seen, the State went out of its way to discourage or to interfere with these Catholic efforts to educate the young. When at a later date the ruling powers did consent to es-

tablish a system of popular colleges throughout the Irish provinces, there was so much in the system to discourage the Catholic population that many conscientious Catholics were afraid that they never could entrust the education of their children to institutions so obviously narrow in their purposes.

All this narrow-minded and bigoted policy on the part of the State gradually gave way before the advance of a more enlightened spirit, but I am now writing of the time when Ireland was still governed openly, and even avowedly, with the object of converting the whole island to the faith and the ways of an English province. That policy proved itself utterly unequal to such a task, and, indeed, one of its immediate results was to fill the Celtic population of the island with the desire to establish a national education and to create a national literature. The old-fashioned policy of each succeeding Government only forced more and more into the minds and hearts of the Irish people the conviction that England's ruling statesmen were determined to compel Ireland to become a mere imitative follower of England or to settle down into the condition of a nation of slaves.

I have often thought that it was perhaps on the whole a fortunate experience for Ireland that, at so comparatively advanced a period of

modern legislation, there should be found in England ruling statesmen of both parties alike who still believed that it only needed the force of coercive laws to banish from the national mind and heart all reverence for the traditions, the language, poetry, and music of the country. We have all seen how the desire for the preservation, or it might almost be called the restoration, of the national language became a recognised influence among all classes of the Irish population, until it grew, as the civilised world now sees it, into a system organised and working for that purpose everywhere throughout the land. Long, however, before the movement had assumed so distinct and effective a form, there was always going on among Irish Nationalists some effort for such a purpose. Daniel O'Connell now and then delivered speeches in the Gaelic language, and the literature of the Young Ireland Party was continually exerting itself towards the same end.

It is a curious fact not often noticed, and yet by no means undeserving of notice, that in the ordinary conversation of Irish men and women who did not profess to mould their talk strictly according to English dictionaries and grammars, some Irish words were used as if they properly belonged to British colloquialism. For instance, I often heard, in those early days of mine, the word “puss” employed as the term for the face of a man or woman, a word of exactly the same

pronunciation as the Irish for face, and was frequently used in ordinary talk by many who did not know that the word belonged to the native language. In the same way a man's hat was frequently called his caubeen ; his shoes were his brogues, and even the name of the drink, so popular then among most classes of Irishmen, high or low, "whiskey," was unquestionably derived from a Gaelic word, which, strange to say, was originally meant to describe nothing more harmful than water.

Of course, just the same confusion of the national with the foreign tongue was to be observed in Scotland and in Wales, but, alike in Scotland and in Wales, the national language was habitually recognised as still maintaining its hold, even among those who accepted the English language as the medium of their everyday conversation. The fact to which I am calling attention was much more remarkable in Ireland, because there, during many generations, the national language had been allowed to pass away from the ordinary life of the educated classes, and many even of the sincerest Irish Nationalists were as ignorant of the national speech as if they had never known anything of Ireland's past history.

Meantime, however, the Irish national music had never been allowed to pass out of recollection, and the Irish harp was still a musical

instrument whose chords were made to vibrate in every Irish home where music formed a part of household education. The fairy legends of Ireland were still treasured and exerted an unfailing influence over the literature of the country, and these fairy legends had in them much that was actually peculiar to the island, and had no more to do with English mythical stories than they had to do with the Arabian Nights. The poets of Ireland, from long before until long after the days of Thomas Moore, were constantly reviving the ancient Irish legend in modern English verse.

One of these poets was James Joseph Callanan, who was born in Cork City in 1795. I have some association of memory with this poet, although he died before I came into the world.

My associations with him come from the fact that he was an intimate friend of my father and mother. He spent much of his early youth in collecting Old Irish legends and ballads and translating them into most amusing English verse. His career is well described in that most valuable work, the "Compendium of Irish Biography," written some years ago by my dear old friend, political and parliamentary colleague and comrade for a long time, Alfred Webb, who has lately died.

Mr. Webb tells us that in 1823 Callanan "became an assistant in the school of Dr. Maginn at Cork, where he remained only a few months; but through Maginn's introduction he became a contributor to "Blackwood" and other magazines. His health, however, was very weakly and he was recommended to remove, if possible, to some warmer climate. He succeeded in obtaining employment as tutor in the family of an Irish gentleman who lived at Lisbon. But the genial climate of Portugal failed to restore his shattered health, and he died in 1829, at little more than thirty-three years of age. He had longed before death to return to Ireland to die in his native city, but the voyage was beyond his strength, and his last words breathed his regret that he could not see Ireland again. Towards the close of his life he wrote a poem, in which he spoke sadly of the troubles and disturbances which then afflicted his native country, and the poem contained a verse full of feeling and beauty, to some words of which many of us in much later years were anxious to attach a peculiar significance. Expressing a hope that "still the days may brighten

"When those tears shall cease to flow,
And the shouts of freedom lighten
The spirits now so drooping low,"

the final verse containing the significant words to which I have alluded ran thus :

“Then should the glad breeze blowing
Convey that message o'er the sea ;
My heart with rapture glowing
Shall bless the hand that made thee free !”

The peculiar significance could not possibly have attached itself to those words in the days when they first reached Ireland. It would have needed the gift of prophecy to suggest any such idea. But when the inventive faculty of man had created the wireless telegraph, why should not we, the countrymen and admirers of Callanan, insist on regarding as a prophetic vision the words that spoke of a glad breeze, conveying the message of good news across the sea ? A critic, quoted by Mr. Webb, says that “Callanan’s lines on Gougane Barra are known to every tourist who visits the romantic regions of the south of Ireland,” and another critic, Samuel Austin Allibone, the distinguished American, author of the “Dictionary of English Literature,” describes the poem as “the most perfect, perhaps, of all Irish minor poems in the melody of its rhythm, the flow of its language, and the weird force of its expressions.”

The love of music, which formed so marked a characteristic of the whole Irish population, was accompanied also, at least among the unedu-

cated, by an intense belief in the continual presence of the supernatural, even among the most material and realistic incidents of existence. The Irish peasant was as firmly convinced of the daily and nightly presence of fairies and witches, goblins and spectres, "headless horses galloping at night," magic wells and caverns, and phantom-haunted lakes, as he was of the presence of the living men and women, horses and cows, and the mountains and rivers which he saw in his every-day pursuits. One could not travel anywhere in Ireland during my early days without finding the evidence of this widely spread, and, indeed, it might be called universal, belief among the peasantry, and even among many classes more under the influence of modern education.

I have always believed that the inborn love for music has a certain affinity with that turn of mind which lends itself readily to a belief in the world of magic. Everywhere one went in those days he was sure to have his attention invited to some well popularly believed to be endowed with a marvellous power, perhaps for the relief of physical malady or for conferring some other blessing on the coming lives of those who believed in the magic of the spell-working water. Here one was shown the ruins of a castle which was believed to be under a curse, and from which its dwellers had at last been driven because of its ever-proved fatality. There he was shown a humble cabin

which had been preserved from infectious disease by the blessing of some long-departed martyr, who had for a time found safe shelter within its walls.

We all know that superstitions of the same kind were prevalent in Scotland and Wales, in parts of England, and in various foreign regions, but I am inclined to believe that nowhere throughout what may be called civilised regions were such superstitions so common, and of such recent existence, as throughout the Irish counties, during that yet not distant time. The Irish peasant always seems to have had a strong suffusion of the imaginative in his nature, and thus was all unconsciously assisted or compelled to people the world around him with figures conjured up from the kingdom of the ghosts.

It may be remembered that at a much more recent period there broke out in England, and not by any means among the humbler classes, that extraordinary superstition which believed that the realms of the supernatural could most readily be invaded by the magic of table-turning. It is true that table-turning and spirit-rapping both came into England from the United States, but the imported mania spread widely, even among some of the educated classes here, and led to long and bewildering controversies, in the course of which several of our ablest scientific men did their best, but for the time in vain, to expose the

absurdity of the movement. An Irish writer, living in England, published a set of verses on the subject, in which he threw ridicule on this new development of superstition among those who ought to have known better. The closing verse runs thus :

“ Oh ! ye ghosts, if any one still lingers
In our dull and working world to-day,
If ye can but speak with feet and fingers,
Hold your tongues and toes for ever pray ! ”

“ If the medium’s knock alone enables
Ye among the quick to keep your post,
Goblins living in the legs of tables,
Do for decency give up the ghost.”

The author of these lines probably felt that the superstitions prevalent among the peasantry of his own country had something of poetry and feeling and imagination in them which were not to be found among the creations of the spirit-rapper and the table-turner.

The Irish peasant had no need of any medium, whether medium or table-turner, to conjure up for him the unreal forms that made their way among the recognised realities of life. The Banshee wailed over the dead ; her lament was familiar to the ears of everyone who had lost a loved and loving relative. The fairies were denizens of the woods and the river banks just as were the deer and the birds. Even among the educated classes there was much less of that

materialistic resolve to admit into the world we see no visitants from the world unseen than there is among these same classes at the present day.

I am not disposed to enter into any argument as to whether our present age is or is not the wiser and the better, because it has shaken off so much of the merely imaginative, and has done so much to make the sense of touch the best test of reality, and to convince us that from the undiscovered country of which Hamlet speaks, "no traveller returns." Indeed, I may here call attention to the fact that an Irish critic and poet, Oliver Goldsmith, pointed out that Hamlet himself had just been visited by a traveller returning from the bourne of that undiscovered country.

I am not, however, attempting to follow up the case which Goldsmith endeavoured to make out, or the argument which was founded upon it—that Shakespeare was deliberately representing his hero as drawing a distinction between the phantom of his dead father empowered to carry a message to the earth, and the father himself, who had passed away for ever into a different sphere of creation. I think, indeed, that the feeling and the fancy of Ireland's Gaelic population were always inclined to divide the phantom world into two quite separate orders—the ghosts of those who had passed away from

earth, and the spirits which visited the earth, but had never belonged to our terrestrial orbit.

However, the educational systems established, maintained, and endowed in Ireland during my early days did not take any account whatever of any beliefs in ghosts and goblins prevailing among the people, but only applied their energies, with the ready help of the penal laws, to that part of the doctrine of Christianity which did not suit the discipline of the English Established Church. I had opportunities of meeting in Ireland many intelligent visitors from Mahometan countries, who professed themselves unable to understand why the Government of England should take so much trouble, and make so much trouble, should employ so much military force, and create so much disturbance to be repressed by that force, merely with the hopeless attempt to prevent the vast majority of the Irish people from following that form of the Christian faith which their ancestors had always followed since Christianity was founded upon earth, and which so many Christian States in Europe were still following.

One curious peculiarity about the struggle is to be found in the fact that the desire to carry on this form of persecution appeared to belong to the ruling powers alone, and found little or no illustration in the ordinary demeanour of Catholics and Protestants towards

each other. I have already reminded my readers that all the movements of Irish rebellion against the absolute rule of England in modern times, and indeed in all times, were shared in, and were for the most part led, by professing and sincere Protestants. In the ordinary way of civil life, the Protestants and Catholics met on the most friendly and familiar terms, and in all manner of social institutions they mingled on terms of genial companionship. Even between the most strict and severe votaries of the two Churches, there was not any line of social separation drawn more distinct and rigorous than that which might prevail throughout England at the present day, so far as social intercourse was concerned, between the members of the Established Church and those of any of the dissenting denominations. Even in our love-making the Catholic lad occasionally paid court to the Protestant lass and vice versa, and in one of the ballads of Moore, the Irish national poet, is to be found the verse :

“ Shall I ask the brave soldier who fights by my side
In the cause of mankind if our creeds agree?
Shall I give up the friend I have trusted and tried
If he kneel not before the same altar with me?
From the heretic girl of my soul shall I fly
To seek somewhere else a more orthodox kiss? ”

No doubt there were many members of both Christian faiths to whom this declaration of

Thomas Moore appeared somewhat lax, but I am now making use of it only to illustrate the friendly feeling which appeared to exist throughout Ireland at the time, among all the different denominations of the Christian religion.

Here, then, we had a Government straining its power in every way—civil, judicial, and military—to enforce a crusade in Ireland which seemed to be, in no sense whatever, insisted on or even suggested by the social relationships of the several denominations in the island. Many, if not most, of the English public, even among the educated and reading public, are still under the impression that the history of Ireland for many years past, indeed, for centuries past, has been a history of irreconcilable hatred between Catholic and Protestant, hatred penetrating thoroughly into private and social life, and compelling successive Governments to keep up continuous efforts for the exclusion of the Catholic population from any share whatever in the making of the laws.

My own conviction, which is fortified by all my own personal experiences and recollections of the past, assures me that an enlightened ministry, led by a genuine statesman, would have had the support of the best men in all denominations of Protestants in England, in the carrying out of a policy for the granting of religious liberty to the Catholics of Ireland.

I do not remember ever having heard, during all my experiences in Ireland, of a riot or disturbance of any kind brought about by the attempt on the part of a Catholic crowd to prevent any public celebration or ceremonial of a purely religious character, in some county mainly occupied by Catholics. Of course, I have heard of, and even looked upon, riots caused by some demonstration made against the Catholic faith by an Orange crowd, in some one of the northern counties where the Orangemen were in the majority, or by some efforts of an Orange mob to break up a Catholic meeting. But, even between the Orangemen and the Catholics, the disputations leading to actual riot were for the most part associated with political movements of some kind, and did not illustrate any organisation of effort to punish a man for holding to the faith in which he had been born and brought up.

I merely dwell upon these memories and their facts in this place with the object of expressing my conviction that in no European country was there ever less excuse for the invention and the carrying out of a criminal code to make penal the following of one particular branch of the Christian faith, than was given by the condition of Ireland at any time since a foreign conqueror invaded and occupied the land of the shamrock. When Daniel O'Connell was striving in his most vehement tones, and with

his most popular and powerful organisation, to obtain the elementary rights of citizens for his fellow-Catholics in Ireland, he was supported publicly and most cordially by large numbers of men belonging to all the various Protestant denominations. Of course, when he set out on his agitation for repeal of the Union, it was natural that a large number of Protestants should strenuously oppose him, for the reason that they did not desire to see a second parliament re-established in Great Britain. But the opposition of such men would have been all the same even if the second parliament were to be composed exclusively of Protestant members, and had nothing to do with any mere hatred of Protestants towards Catholics or Catholics towards Protestants.

I have met with many and many an Englishman in Ireland during the early fifties, who expressed to me his perfect amazement at the fatuity with which English statesmen, accepted as qualified makers of laws, could have persisted so long in the maintenance of penal codes and religious disqualification for a country like Ireland, which could have been so easily ruled and made so peaceful, prosperous, and happy by a system of civil and religious equality for all orders and denominations and classes. I always remember, with much satisfaction, how many Englishmen I used to know in those far-off days

who had become from their own observation and experience convinced believers in the principle that Ireland's one great want was merely such an enlightened system of government as England and Scotland and Wales were then enjoying. We had such English friends and colleagues in our local political associations ; they pleaded our cause in our debating societies. I met some of them long years afterwards in the House of Commons, and we talked often concerning our common recollections and experiences in the earlier days, and found ourselves still in complete agreement as to the principles of civilised government.

If any reader of these pages will think over the number of reforms which have been made since that time in the system of Ireland's administrations, his attention will inevitably be drawn to the fact that these reforms, now universally accepted as essential to the peace and prosperity of the island, were merely gradual evolutions in that development of a system which the troublesome and unmanageable Irish had been demanding for generations. These unmanageable Irish were set down as rebels against social order by succeeding governments and even by some governments professing to be Liberal.

It will be seen that after all the Irish rebels were the true constitutional politicians, and the champions of landlord rule and of coercion measures were, in fact, the disturbers of order and

the upholders of anarchy. For many generations the absolute mastery of the landowner over the homes and the happiness of his tenants has been enforced by the police and the military under the command of Dublin Castle. "The chain of the Catholic clank to his rags" was a poetic line which described with absolutely prosaic accuracy of metaphor the condition of religious liberty illustrated at the same time by the legislation enforced upon the Irish people.

But the fact which I particularly wish to impress upon my readers just now is that the English people as a whole had little or nothing to do with the maintenance of the legislative systems which were then carried out under the superintendence of the Lord-Lieutenants and their soldiers and police. Englishmen in general, who had not themselves any opportunity of studying the actual conditions of Ireland, gave little thought to the whole subject, and naturally assumed that the statesmen who were entrusted with the government of the British Islands were doing the best that could be done for that unmanageable island which lay on the other side of St. George's Channel. So far as my experience goes, the Englishmen who had the opportunity of making themselves acquainted with the conditions actually existing in Ireland, and who took an interest in the whole question, almost invariably came to see that the cause of law and

order in Ireland, and of consequent peace and prosperity in the island, had had for its most persistent and most consistent enemies the administrators, who were continually deplored the hard task they had undertaken when they ventured on the government of the ignorant, disorderly and unmanageable Irish people.

There are not to be found in the political writings of the past two centuries any denunciations of Ireland's maladministration by English law more severe than are to be found in the published opinions of English writers and speakers. In plain truth, the English and the Irish never were enemies whenever they came to know anything really of each other, and as soon as Englishmen in general began to take an interest in the whole subject, the rule of class despotism in Ireland began to find itself foredoomed. Some of us even at that time were firmly convinced that if the educated men and women of England could only be prevailed upon to listen to a full and clear exposition of these claims, and to give them an impartial consideration, the public opinion of England would soon be brought to recognise their justice and to call for its recognition by legislative enactment.

I am still strongly of opinion that the Young Ireland of those days was much more just in its appreciation of the English in general than was that same English public in its appreciation of

the Young Ireland, which was then giving so much trouble to the English Government. I can even remember that some of us young fellows set to work at the drawing up of a document, which it was hoped might be put into circulation and published as an appeal to the English people on behalf of Ireland's claim for the fair consideration of her national demands. In this document the suggestion was made, or was intended to be made, that a number of conspicuous Englishmen, representing all political parties, should be invited to come over to Ireland for a certain time and there study for themselves the conditions, the grievances, or alleged grievances, and the claims of the Irish people—the religious question, the land question, the great constitutional and national question—and should thus be enabled to make known their conclusions, or at least the conclusions of their majority, to the Houses of Parliament at Westminster.

We believed ourselves entitled to offer to these visitors the fullest and freest opportunity of forming a thorough examination into all the various questions on which they were to be called upon to pass a judgment. I cannot say that any practical result came of this proposition. Other and more pressing subjects came up for consideration, some new disturbances took place in different parts of the country, and were suppressed by very violent measures, and the whole

project passed out of sight and out of mind. Some of us, however, still retained, and still retain, our firm belief that if the great national questions, then disturbing Ireland, could have been brought directly and practically under the consideration of an inquiring committee, formed of independent, intellectual, and representative Englishmen from all parties and sects, the result of the inquiry would have been to win over to the cause of Ireland the best intellect of England.

I may say that among the Irish men and women who felt and maintained this hope and faith in the intelligence and impartiality of thoughtful Englishmen, were not to be found many of that Irish class whom I have already described in these pages as being more English than the English themselves. Perhaps one reason for this fact was to be found in the view which those anti-Irish Irish folks habitually took of that England, from which they professed, or pretended, to claim a somewhat far-off hereditary descent. These English-Irish were usually in the habit of regarding the English population as absolutely identical with the particular form of government which each English-Irishman admired, and followed ; and if that particular form of government did not happen to be then in office, he could be found as severe in his repudiation of the then existing political England as though he were a Young

Irelander of the most advanced and advancing national sentiments.

Now we, of the Young Ireland party, took a broader view of the English as a people. We had no especial faith in any form of English government, and perhaps at that time could not see any great difference, so far as Ireland was concerned, between Liberal and Conservative, or, as we should more probably have put it in those days, between Whig and Tory. We had seen measures of land reform and measures of political and religious emancipation opposed now by Whigs and now by Tories; we had seen criminal prosecutions conducted and carried through under Whig administrations as well as under Tory governments.

But that set of young Irishmen with whom I was then politically associated, somehow or other, always had the fact clearly established in their minds, that there was an English people which must not be identified with, or confounded with, any form of existing English government. We saw that the vast majority of Englishmen were as completely cut off from any participation in the direction of England's political affairs as were the majority in Ireland itself. We knew that the great majority of Englishmen, including practically the whole of the working and wage-earning classes, were cut off from the right of giving a vote for the

election of a member of the House of Commons. We knew that not only was every member of those orders precluded from obtaining a seat in the House of Commons, but that he was not even allowed to take any part in the election of a member to a seat in that house. Therefore we always had in our minds, and very naturally, the conviction that we should be likely to find a much more favourable and appreciative audience for “the case of Ireland stated” than we could possibly find just then in the House of Lords, or even in the House of Commons. The events of the intermediate years have fully, in their due course, borne out our convictions.

Every extension of the franchise, every improvement in the legislative conditions and composition of the British Parliament, has tended more and more to secure a fair hearing for Ireland’s complaints and demands to help in the accomplishment of measures, for the improvement of Ireland’s system of land tenure, for the restriction, mitigation, or abolition of the landlords’ sovereign rights, and for the recognition of Ireland’s just claims to the restoration of her national Parliament.

I may perhaps add also, and not inappropriately, that we young Irishmen of those now far distant days were much stimulated in our feelings towards the people of England generally by our intense love for English literature. I

have told already in these pages how the educated classes throughout Ireland, down to the very poorest of those who had obtained anything like a fair education, were as much devoted to English literature, to its study and its enjoyment, as the most English of Englishmen could possibly be. We loved intensely our own Irish literature, and most of us, who had any opportunity that way, were even then striving to make ourselves acquainted with the Irish language and its poetry and literature generally; but we had the warmest, the most unmixed admiration for the great English authors of the past and present, and I question very much whether Chaucer and Spenser, Shakespeare and Milton, Scott and Dickens and Thackeray, had a larger proportion of enthusiastic admirers among the population of England herself than among the population of Ireland. I feel quite sure that such appreciation and admiration of great English authors helped us much towards a recognition of the fact that England's ill-treatment of Ireland was the work mainly of England's privileged and ruling classes, and not in any sense of the English as a people.

Up to the time with which I am now dealing, I think it right to point out that Ireland as a whole had no educational system for the majority of her people, except such as she was able to provide for herself. She had, of course, the University

of Dublin, but this, as all my readers well know, provided a system of education, and degrees and prizes for education, which were made available only to those who belonged to the religious faith of the small minority in Ireland.

Many improvements and advances have, of course, been made since those days, and are being made still ; but at the time with which I am dealing the Catholic population of Ireland was practically put outside, so far as State legislation was concerned, any of the educational systems conferred upon the island. But we knew that even in England there was then no State system established with the object of putting a thorough education within the reach of great masses of the poorer population. Indeed my strong impression is that in those days the general education of the people in Scotland, in Wales, and in Ireland was distinctly better than that of the poorer population in England.

We young fellows in Ireland had therefore got into the way, and very naturally, I think, under all the conditions, of regarding ourselves as fellow-sufferers with the English people from the evil system which made aristocracy and wealth the masters of legislation. Now that I look back composedly over a very considerable stretch of years to those early impressions of my companions and of myself, I feel only the more and more inclined to approve of and sympathise with

our doctrines of those days. We used to have a sort of romantic idea at that time that a Young Ireland pilgrimage to England, made with the object of expounding personally the real case of Ireland, might have had a convincing influence over large masses of England's population, and won for us and for our cause countless friends, who might otherwise have never known that we had any genuine claims to friendship. I am by no means certain even now that such a bloodless crusade might not have had a most happy, enduring, and indeed final effect in winning over the great majority of England's population to a recognition of the justice of our national cause, and thus anticipating, by nearly half a century, the progress of that cause as an influence on the making of English history.

I am now writing of the years that immediately followed the insurrection of 1848, and before any really effective Irish National Party had been formed in the House of Commons. The Parnell movement in itself proved conclusively that the English public could be prevailed upon to listen to the statement of Ireland's claims, the English public which had then obtained for itself some share in the making of England's legislation. The greatest English statesman of his generation, or for many generations before, Mr. Gladstone, had been won over to our cause, and had carried the

measure of Home Rule through the House of Commons, a measure which was defeated only by the now threatened and practically doomed despotic control of the House of Lords.

I still think it not altogether a merely fanciful idea to believe that a political crusade of educated and intelligent and true - hearted Irishmen throughout all parts of England and amongst all classes of the English people might have done most valuable work in bringing about that sympathetic understanding between England and Ireland which has already, despite all the difficulties in the way, gone far towards the early accomplishment of Gladstone's noble effort.

In any case, I have thought it worth while to give to my readers some account of the ideas which were entertained by a large number of young Irishmen in my early years of a patriotic crusade for the conversion of the English Government to the cause of Ireland's Home Rule. Carlyle, indeed, tells us that the might-have-beens are for the most part a vanity, but then the might-have-beens would not necessarily be always a vanity if the attempt to accomplish a change while the change was yet to be had not passed among the might-have-beens.

MY HOME AND FAMILY

CHAPTER IV

MY HOME AND FAMILY

MY first home was in a house on the southern extremity of Cork City, with the open country almost at its very doors. My family consisted of my father and mother and an elder sister of my mother, an unmarried sister, bearing the name of Elizabeth, but whom we, the children, knew by the familiar title of Aunt Bess. We, the children, were three in number, my sister Ely, my elder by a year, myself, and my brother Frank, my junior by three years.

My first distinct consciousness of existence is associated with the birth of Frank—I mean so far as my present memories can bring events back to me—and I feel somewhat ashamed to say that that consciousness of existence is not so distinctly associated with the fact of his birth as with another and what ought to have been a far less interesting event. The nurse, who had been attending on my mother in her confinement, came to me and told me that I now had a brother, and she bade me to celebrate the event by drinking some sherry from a glass which she uplifted to

my tremulous lips. The taste of the wine surprised me too much for any stammering words of mine to give it adequate expression, and I feel bound to say that, when I confided the news to my Aunt Bess, the result was that the probably well-meaning but certainly very ill-advised nurse received a most severe rebuke, and, I believe, was promptly brought to the close of her engagement with the family.

The next event which I can remember in my life is associated with the Coronation of Queen Victoria. I was at that time well into my seventh year, but my attention had never been called to the important subject of regal successions, and I knew nothing whatever about the reign of William IV, or the probable accession of a queen to the English throne. My attention, however, was very much occupied indeed by the processions of cavalry and infantry passing through the streets of Cork on that day, and the frequent discharges of cannon from the great barracks of the city.

I was taken, with my sister and brother, to see some of these military pageants, and I can still distinctly recall the astonishing impression made on my untutored mind, when one of the ladies who accompanied us announced that these countries were now to be under petticoat government. I interpreted this announcement in a somewhat too literal sense, and I took it to mean

that the countries were henceforward to be ruled by women and women alone, in every city and every village and every home, and, in fact, that as a matter of course in the future, wherever men and women were living in these lands, the women were to be the rulers, with Queen Victoria as the ruler of all.

I flatter myself now by thinking that it showed a somewhat precocious mind to have been capable of making even this foolish mistake, and to have been able to put any significance of any kind to the phrase "petticoat government," and to have thus given to my astonished relatives a distinct prediction of the far-off but coming time when the Suffragettes were to proclaim the right of women to hold sovereign sway over the destinies of Great Britain and Ireland. However that may be, it is certain that with the Coronation of Queen Victoria is associated my first observation of political events.

My father, Michael Francis McCarthy, was, as I have said, chief clerk to the local magistrates, and by the tenure of his office came into association with most matters and questions of interest coming up in the affairs of the city. He was a man of highly cultured literary tastes, a very accomplished Greek and Latin scholar, and especially given to the study of Greek. I have heard him say more than once that on some occasions, when alone and not occupied by any

thoughts of official work, he found himself almost coming to think in Greek. He was a great lover of English literature, and especially of that which belonged to his own time.

My father was very fond of writing verses, and had, indeed, a distinct gift in that way. I remember a very effective poetic epigram of his which, however, requires some preliminary explanation to make its meaning and its humour intelligible. A very charming young girl, a friend of our family, a Miss Toler—her baptismal name is not necessary to my story—was about to be married to a young man, a distant relative of our family, named Burke. My father and mother were to be among the wedding party and at the breakfast, which was to follow the marriage, and at the breakfast he composed an extemporeaneous little verse appropriate to the event. The poem ran thus :

“ Now what could be stranger or droller
Than the spell we are going to work her?
Though gladly we meet to extol her (ex-Toler),
We are all met together to burke her? ”

He wrote also a poetic address to the Blackwater River, which was much admired at the time by South of Ireland readers, and even by other readers as well. Spenser tells us of the Avondhu, that by the English is called Blackwater, and my father held to the Irish name. After many verses

of glowing admiration of the noble stream he goes on to say :

“Sweet Avondhu, there’s that with thee
That could enrich less noble river—
Along thy banks there live and be
Warm, loving hearts renewing ever !
Kind faces there and gladdening eyes,
And life’s best, sweetest courtesies,
That well might make a Paradise
The wildest heath that meets the breeze !”

After many other verses thrilling with like admiration, the writer ends with the words :

“This bard, his life could he prolong,
'Midst scenes so varied, ever new,
Would wish thee—a far better song,
Sweet Avondhu !”

My father’s great early ambition, as he often told us in our more grown-up days, was to have become a barrister, but the difficulties at that time imposed by legislation in the way of Catholics studying for the bar involved too much cost to render it possible for him to gratify his desire. He might have been perhaps a successful author, and in his mature days he was a frequent writer of prose and poetry for local journals and magazines ; but he never attempted any lengthened work, which could have been accepted by the public even of Ireland, to say nothing of the British public generally. He had naturally a great desire to travel, and he loved reading about travels in France and Italy and Greece and the

East ; but he had never, until a much later period of his life, gone anywhere outside the limits of his native country, and he had soon settled down to what seemed to be the appointed limitations of his life. There was nothing of the recluse about his nature, and he was very much given up to what may be described as the social life of those classes in the city with whom he habitually mingled. I can hardly ever remember in those early days his spending a whole evening at home with us, unless, indeed, when he had some relatives or friends to spend the evening with him.

My mother, on the other hand, was absolutely given up to the work of looking after her children, entering into all their ways and wishes, helping towards their education, reading to them from books, striving to develop their taste for music, and, in fact, making herself their tutor, their guide, their companion, and their very playfellow. Thus she continued to be so long as she had a family still living in Cork City, and while she had a family around her she was ever the light and life of its home.

One of the greatest happinesses of my early life, and one of the greatest griefs of my whole life, must be associated, for me, with the name of my sister, my only sister, Ely McCarthy. My sister grew up a slender and pretty girl, with what might be described as a somewhat classical

profile ; she had a sweet nature, a loving heart, and a most remarkable intellect. I have already mentioned in these early recollections that she died shortly after she had attained the age of twenty, at a time when we of our own family, and all others who knew her well, were quite convinced that she was destined to make for herself a distinguished mark in literature. She had received an excellent education, first at a girls' school in our city, and afterwards from some private teachers ; but her best education was given by herself and her own studies. She was from her very childhood a great lover of books, and had acquired a thorough knowledge of French and Italian, at least so far as the reading of these languages went, for she had not much opportunity of practising how to speak in the two foreign tongues with fluency and grammatical precision. In those far-off days German had not yet come into much appreciation among young literary students in the south of Ireland. Ely knew, partly through my assistance, a little of Latin and of the great Latin authors, but had not ventured on the study of Greek. She had a most cheerful and happy disposition, and was one of the best-tempered human beings I have ever known, and I had constant opportunities of knowing all about her temper, for we were ever close companions—indeed, I might well say comrades. Ely wrote a little poem to me on one

of my birthdays, of which I may quote the opening lines :

“ First of playmates, best companion !
Many bless thee fervently,
But the warmest, fondest blessing
Ever comes from me to thee ! ”

In another of her verses, obviously of imitative structure, she tells of one :

“ Who taught his sister first to ride,
Who did her little pony guide,
And with her every gift divide :
My brother.”

I can well remember my efforts to teach young Ely how to ride, and how delighted she was with the exercise and the teaching and the pony, and what grief it gave to the whole family when, during some sudden trouble of fortune which came on my father, the pony had to be sold and our riding exercises for the time had to be given up. The loss of the pony and its trouble to us two recall to my mind another trouble, brought upon us at an even earlier date by the loss of a dear little dog, a spaniel, who bore the name of “ Dash.” This little dog was the close and faithful companion of my sister and brother and me in all our walks and excursions and games, and in our fireside amusements during the later hours of each day.

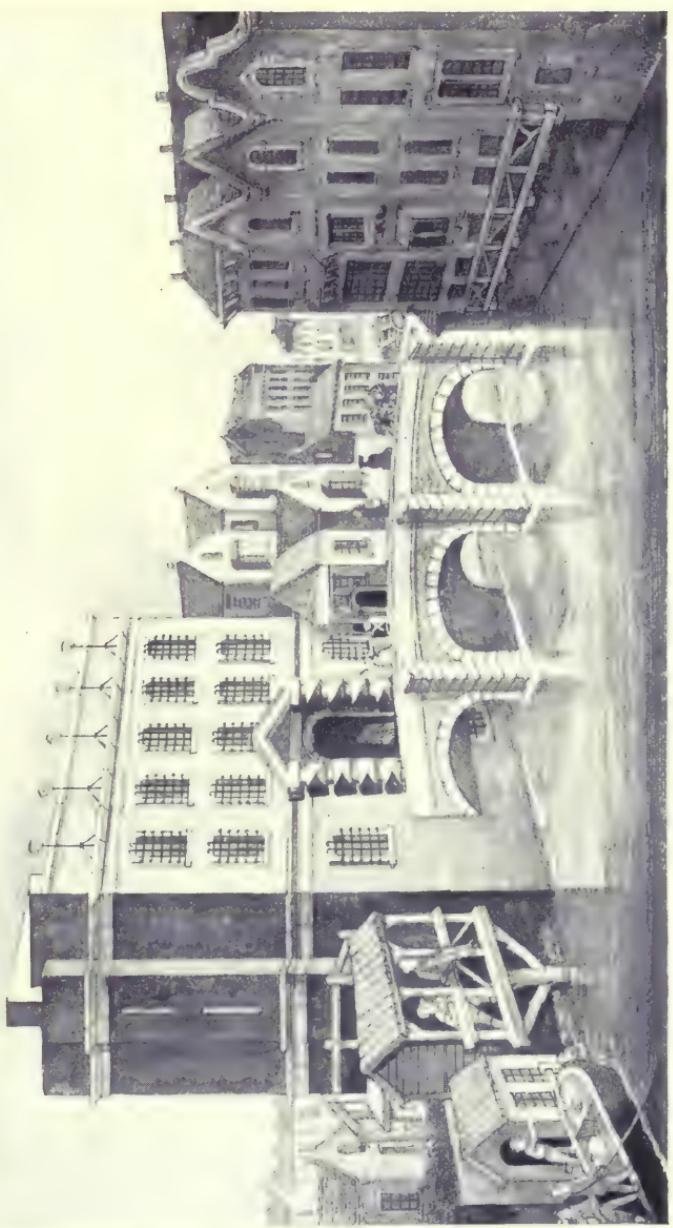
We three had all our education at home during our childhood years, but it was arranged

at last that we should be sent to schools in the city, and we began our studies on the same day, my sister in a girls' school in one part of the city, and my brother and I under a teacher for boys. School hours were rather early then in Cork City, and we had to leave our home before many of the shops were open. Now our little Dash had been accustomed to go out with us on our rambles before breakfast, and this morning he missed us at the accustomed spot, the little front garden where we used to fore-gather when about to start on our wandering. We afterwards learned that he had been seen to wait there, giving evident tokens of alarm and impatience. After a while he went back into the house and searched all its rooms, in the vain quest after his lost friends, and when he met our mother he made clear demonstrations of his loneliness and trouble. She reassured him as expressively and affectionately as she could, but it was clearly impossible for her to explain in terms intelligible to even the most quick-minded of dogs the cause of our absence and the sure prospects of our early return. He left her at last with many expressions of distress, and then he soon disappeared from our home, his as well as ours, and was never seen there again.

When we three returned in the early evening, and heard of his disappearance, which, of course, filled us with intense anxiety and

alarm, my brother and I started at once in search of our little comrade. We went into the city and looked up many shops with which our little dog was familiar, and we found that he had called in, if I may put it so, at most or all of them, and had seemed to be in quest of something lost; but as he could not explain himself, there was nothing to be done for him, and he soon disappeared. We all in our family still hoped, and for a time fully believed, that he would make his way back to his home before the day had quite changed into night, and we clung to this hope and made many efforts to realise it during several successive days. But we never saw him again. Poor little Dash was lost to our lives for ever. Something must have happened to him—he must have been carried off by some unconscientious admirer of his breed and his looks, or it seemed possible that he might have wandered down to the river-side, whither he was often accustomed to go with us, and may there have been made a captive by some admiring shipper and carried away to a foreign land. This was, indeed, the most hopeful conclusion we could come to, and we clung to it resolutely for a long time. But we never again saw our dear old Dash; he lived for us only in memory, where for me, the sole survivor of that household, he still remains.

Ely did not remain for many years at school



or under direct tuition of any kind. She was by nature much more of a student than what might be described as a pupil, and she soon became absorbed in the study of literature and, as I have already said, of three or four languages. She wrote many poems and made many translations, and began to acquire for herself a reputation among those in Cork, and they formed a very considerable proportion of the population, who gave to books their habitual study. To one of the magazines which we had in Cork she contributed a translation of a novel by George Sand—I need hardly say, one of the few novels of that great author which might have been read aloud in any home even in Cork, where parents and guardians were especially strict as to the moral character of the studies undertaken by their children and their wards.

Ely made many translations, from French and Italian poets, which found editors who gave them publication. I have read many of her writings, since I took to the profession of authorship, and at a period when I think I could feel sure that brotherly affection could not lead me quite astray in my critical judgment, and I still feel convinced that Ely had in her the capacity to make for herself a successful and memorable career in literature, if only she had lived long enough to cultivate to the full her literary gift. I have often had ideas of collecting

what seemed to me the best efforts of her work and publishing them in a volume, but I had to lead for many years a life of unceasing work in journalism and in literature, in politics and in Parliament, and my idea thus became put off from year to year. It was put off also because I felt a certain dread as to the impartial accuracy of my judgment with regard to the work actually done by Ely, although I had no doubt as to the realisation of my brightest hopes, if my sister could only have lived to a greater maturity of years and intellect and culture, and I felt a nervous horror at the thought of disparaging criticisms showering on my sacred task. I have, however, come round to my earlier inclination, and I still hope to realise it in a published volume.

To return to my recollections of the living Ely, I may say that she always led a remarkably quiet life. Her nature had not, indeed, anything of the recluse in it. She much enjoyed the society of her friends, young men and young women, and of many elders of both sexes also. She delighted in even the thought of travel, and always cherished the fond hope that in some happy course of events it might be her good fortune to visit those scenes in foreign lands which had been pictured to her by the poets, romancists, and the painters of various countries and centuries ; but she had never travelled anywhere outside the limits of her own county—had never seen the Lakes of

Killarney or the Rock of Cashel or the Wicklow Mountains.

One of the dearest companions of my sister and me, and one of the dearest companions of my life after her death, was Thomas Crosbie, who subsequently became a man of great influence and honour in his native city. He had begun life after his schoolboy days as a law student, but he gave up that career and became attached to the reporting staff of the "Cork Examiner," the journal which I served in the same capacity. He rose to be the writer of leading articles for the "Examiner," and afterwards became its editor-in-chief, and later still, having made much money by his literary works, he acquired the ownership of the paper on the death of its proprietor, my dear old friend John Francis Maguire.

Thomas Crosbie—Tom Crosbie, as I always called him—was what Americans of that time might have described as the brightest "all-round man" I knew who never actually came to win a genuine celebrity. He was a brilliant writer, a most eloquent speaker, his argument of any public question being always lighted up by flashes of spontaneous and never-failing wit and humour. I may add that Thomas Crosbie was, during his successful career, several times invited and urged to become the representative of an Irish constituency in the

House of Commons. But he always declined to accept such a position, no matter how earnestly and urgently the invitation was pressed upon him. He and I maintained our friendship and our intimacy until his death—a premature death, several years ago. His journal, the “Cork Examiner,” is now conducted by his eldest son, and seems to have an ever-increasing influence throughout the south of Ireland, and indeed in every part of the country where the national cause is a ruling influence.

Ely had a happy faculty for the invention of new pastimes or games for young folks, who, like ourselves, had something of a literary or historical turn, and for the discovery of young companions among our neighbours who had inclinations of a like kind. We, the youngsters of our family, were then much interested in Roman history and in classical stories generally, and she invented a sport for which she was fortunately able to ascertain that the boys and girls of a neighbouring family had likewise an aptitude and an inclination. She therefore converted herself and her two brothers into a Roman army of the Hannibal era, while our young friends on the other side of our garden wall cheerfully accepted the part of the Carthaginians. There was a piece of elevated ground a little way outside the limits of these gardens, which bore the name of Straw Hill, and this we chose as the scene

of frequent encounters, varied by invading attacks upon our respective enclosures.

Happily for the dramatic effect of our impersonations, the weapons such as we knew were habitually used by the Romans did not involve any very elaborate or costly efforts at imitation, and it was easy enough to display on our open-air stage some tolerable likenesses of swords and javelins and bows and arrows which might have belonged to the days of the wars between Rome and Carthage. Ely, who naturally acted as our stage manager, found it easy enough to array herself in a costume which did not look absurdly unlike that of a Roman youth, while we, the boys, did our best to get ourselves up with something of similar appropriateness, and in any case the spectators were not likely to be quite hypercritical, as they consisted mainly of mothers and aunts and cousins, and casual visitors, who did not concern themselves much about the details of Roman or Carthaginian war costumes and military operation. Our audiences were made up for the most part of women, for the men of the family were usually engaged at business of some kind in the city.

Thus we had our battles and sieges, our invasions and our captures, and some of us occasionally lay for a time on the field in attitudes as like to those of expiring warriors as any liberal-minded relative could reasonably have expected

to see. I remember that one of our warrior band was afterwards removed with his family to Dublin, and we thus altogether lost sight of him for the time. Ely afterwards wrote to him a letter which, as was habitual with her just then, she cast into rhythmic form. His Christian name was James, but I am sorry to say that his family name has long since passed out of my memory. I quote a few lines of the epistle :

“ Dear James, I now write in a hurry,
So pardon my very bad rhyme ;
And the letters are all in a flurry,
Because I have scarce any time.

“ You remember Straw Hill and the battle
We fought on that venturesome day,
And our swords and our arrows did rattle
To drive Carthaginians away.”

The other verses have passed out of my recollection, but I think that even these will suggest something of humour and fancy not altogether common on the part of a girl who had not then quite reached her twelfth year.

As Ely grew up, and when her years entitled her to be ranked in the order of young womanhood, she showed an increasing capacity for the stage management appropriate to the domestic drawing-room. She also proved herself an adept in the faculty of discovering suitable comrades of both sexes in the operations of the drawing-room drama. By this I do not mean what would

now be called the domestic drama. Our literary ambition was not by any means limited to the arena of modern domestic life for the creation of our efforts of fancy. We, the young folks of that set, had far loftier aims. We aspired to nothing short of the region of high tragedy, or of philosophical drama represented by great classic authors.

I remember that I then produced a play all set forth in blank verse, and dealing with great classical subjects. It had necessarily to be a drama which did not occupy much time in its performance, for about an hour was the most which our grown-up audiences could be expected to give to the performances of a dramatic company still composed of mere youngsters. I think Ely must have been the eldest among the ranks of the performers, and I am sure that she had not then quite reached to the mature age of eighteen.

My drama was supposed to be cast as in the age of Euripides, and it had a touch of supposed philosophy in it. I am afraid it must have been a rather absurd production, and I think I occasionally heard some of the elders among our audience indulging now and then in a burst of half-concealed laughter at some of my poetic and heroic effusions. I am glad to say that I had the good sense not to keep a copy of the piece, for when I glanced over its pages, only

a very few years after its final performance, I was even more severe in my judgment of the ambitious effort than I probably might have been some twenty or thirty years afterwards. All that I remember distinctly about it is associated with my recollections of Ely's stage management, of the sweet gentleness with which she suggested necessary alterations, and pointed out errors without hesitation, while all the time conveying to me and to the other performers her very sincere admiration of our purposes, and even of our execution. She was, in fact, the life and the light of the whole affair, and I cannot help thinking even now that it reflected some credit on the intellectual ambitions of an obscure set of young people in one quarter of an Irish country town, to have had such inclinations and such endeavours, and to have found so consistent, so patient, and at once so poetic and practical a leader for our movement in the person of a maiden still under the age of eighteen.

I cannot remember that I ever found in Ely, between whom and me there always existed the most affectionate confidence, any evidences of an ambition for poetic or other literary success. She appeared to write verse and prose, ballads and stories, only because she enjoyed such work, as she enjoyed her wanderings among the woods or by the water, and she felt impelled to write as she felt impelled to read, for the mere delight

of the occupation. Her little room was filled with books, and there were none among these which she had not read. She loved pictures and picture galleries, and there were many among our friends and acquaintances who had devoted themselves to the work of the painter and the sculptor, and were already beginning to make a name for themselves in Cork and in Dublin, and some even in London.

There was one painter, a man of mature years, who was an intimate friend of my father and mother, and often came to our house, and who all his friends firmly believed was destined to win for himself a genuine celebrity in his art. He painted an excellent portrait of my father, and one also of my mother, which were indeed speaking likenesses, and were put on exhibition in the galleries of Cork and of Dublin, and obtained much praise from the Irish Press. These portraits were given to my parents by the artist, and remained ornaments of our household for many years after, until they were both destroyed by a sudden accident in the absence of most of the family. The name of the painter was John Q'Keeffe, and we all, and the whole public of Cork as well as we, were firmly convinced that his name was destined to immortality as well as the best of the great English painters who were making themselves celebrated at that time. But I have tried in vain during my maturer years

to find any evidence that the name of John O'Keeffe had become known to the art-loving world in general.

Ely herself made some attempts at painting, but she soon discovered that whatever artistic capacity she had was for literary work, rather than for that of the painter, and she acknowledged her discovery to her family and to her friends with the simple candour which was a part of her nature. I have often thought that if she had been living in London during these, her early days, she might have been invited by some publisher to try her hand at a novel, and I cannot doubt that under such conditions she would have won for herself, even within her twenty years of life, a distinct and enduring success. My own great wish for her would have been that she had written a novel created out of Irish scenery and Irish characters drawn from her own experience, observations, and romantic intuition, and I still believe that she might thus have bequeathed to the world an Irish story, not unfit to rank with Gerald Griffin's exquisite romance of poetic imagination and faithful realism, "The Collegians." I feel sure that if she had been allowed by the destinies to accomplish such a work, she would have given to the reading world a faithful and a lasting picture of a certain phase of Irish life at that time which, while as faithful as a photograph, would have bequeathed

to coming generations a romance of Irish life not touched upon by any of the successful Irish novelists of those early days, the Lady Morgans and Crofton Crokers, Charles Levers, and Samuel Lovers. Poor Ely, however, was not destined to achieve any such success, or, indeed, any actual success of an abiding kind in Literature. Her life came to an end before either fame or failure had been achieved.

“THE HARP OF ERIN”

CHAPTER V

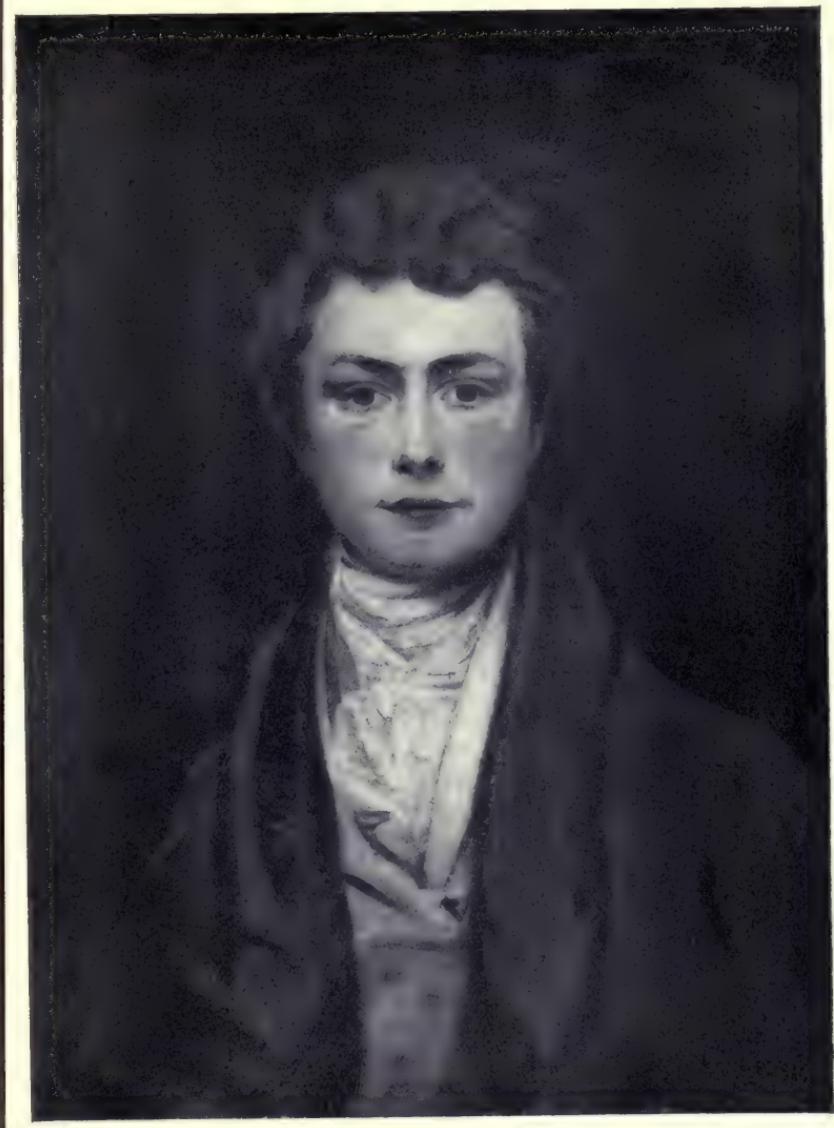
“ THE HARP OF ERIN ”

THE influence of Thomas Moore's poems and their music was still all-prevailing and all-powerful in the Ireland of my youthful days. The man himself was living until after I had become enough of a “grown up” to make his personal acquaintance, but for many years he had not been in the habit of visiting the south of Ireland. My father had met him personally more than once at an earlier date, and I had many friends of mature years who could tell me of his companionship and of his ways. His influence meanwhile, alike as poet and as patriot, was still supreme in Ireland, and the music which he had wedded to his ballads breathed a genuine national inspiration.

Now I do not mean to say that Moore's national ballads and their music have ever ceased to be an influence in Ireland, and among Irish men and women everywhere. But there can be no doubt that for some time at least the influence of the ballads and the music which were brought out by the poets who, in the pages of “The Nation,” devoted themselves to

Ireland's immediate cause, had some, and a very direct effect, in calling the attention of the country to the objects of Ireland's rising enthusiasm for a new and active endeavour to make the island a self-governing domain. Even during this crisis, however, the songs of Moore were familiar to almost every home, and their music might be heard in every street and in every valley, and the Temperance bands organised for their own special purposes by the followers of Father Mathew delighted many a teetotal gathering by the melodies associated with the words of Moore.

The fame, and most certainly the popularity of Moore, must for ever rest chiefly on his "Irish Melodies." His longer and more ambitious poems, such as "Lalla Rookh" and "The Loves of the Angels," never found a very high place in the age which had brought out a Byron, a Shelley, and a Wordsworth, while his prose works—historical, biographical, or merely humorous—however interesting or useful in themselves, cannot be said to add anything to his national or his international fame. His songs are not, indeed, so universally popular as they were in my younger days among Irish men and women of all ranks and classes, and even in English concert-halls and drawing-rooms. But their words and their music still live and linger in Irish homes and hearts all over the world, and



THOMAS MOORE.

BY J. JACKSON, R.A.

(From the portrait in the National Portrait Gallery.)

Emery Walker.

will ever be associated with the modern history of Ireland.

There are few poets belonging to any country the echo of whose lines does not seem at one period or another to sink into a prolonged silence. No one will venture to say that until the last few years Byron was read or discussed in England with anything like the universality of eagerness and interest which was once given to his works and to the story of his life. I can myself bear witness within my own distinct recollection to the fading away of Beranger's influence in France, and that of Freiligrath in Germany. But my present purpose is rather to go back to the time, the days of my boyhood and my youth in Ireland, when the words and the music of Moore still made themselves felt and known in every Irish heart and every Irish home. I can hardly recall to memory some beautiful Irish valley or lake in the evening time, by the sinking sun or by the rising moon, without recalling at the same time to mind and to memory the harmonising strains of an Irish melody by Moore.

But it must be owned that the fading of Moore's influence during my early Irish days was very much owing to the manner in which he had withdrawn himself from any association with the new movements and hopes of the rising generation in Ireland, and had settled down to be the protected favourite of some

great English patrons. One of these patrons and very sincere admirers was Lord John Russell, afterwards Earl Russell, and I can well remember how, several days after the death of Moore on the 25th February, 1852, one of the leading daily papers of London told the public that Lord John Russell was still evidently suffering, amid all the movement of parliamentary life, from the grief which was caused to him by the death of his dear old friend. The then Lord Lansdowne was, as everyone knows, Moore's great benefactor and patron ; in fact, the story of that patronage may fairly be described as the latest illustration in England's modern life of the old-fashioned system which allowed the poet to accept openly and avowedly the protection of some great peer or other well-provided benefactor.

It was not, however, because of Moore's acceptance of such patronage that his influence had begun somewhat to diminish among his own countrymen. There were two reasons. The first was, as I have already said, that Moore had for many years been withdrawing himself more and more from any direct association with his own island and its people. The second was still more powerful. It was found in the growth and the spread of that new development of national sentiment which felt itself compelled, or at least impelled, to regard English governments, even the most enlightened of what then were called

Whig governments, as hostile to Ireland's national claims and as rulers from whom nothing was to be expected. The Tories were then looked upon by Irish Nationalists as in no practical sense any worse than the Whigs. We were yet far off from the days when English statesmen had come to the front who were ready to give a full and fair hearing to Ireland's claim for justice, and to Ireland's own representations of what she considered to be her rightful claims. In the meantime the national feeling had been growing stronger and stronger, until it had come at last to be one of distinct hostility to any Irishman who identified himself with the rule of any English government, all the more especially if he had accepted office under any English Prime Minister.

An illustration of this feeling was found in the case of Richard Lalor Sheil, who had for years been applauded throughout Ireland as one of Daniel O'Connell's supporters in his efforts to obtain from the British Parliament justice for Ireland's national claims. Sheil was a man of whom any country might well be proud. He was a brilliant writer both of prose and verse ; he wrote many successful dramas, successful at least at the time, and one of which, "Evadne," is still remembered by all who make the drama a study. When, under the influence of O'Connell, he entered public life as an advocate of the Catholic

claims, and obtained, by O'Connell's influence, a seat in the House of Commons as representative of an Irish constituency, he soon proved himself one of the foremost orators in the debates of Westminster Palace. There is still surviving in parliamentary circles a statement to the effect that the only opinion on political subjects which Gladstone and Disraeli held in common, was the opinion that Sheil was a greater orator than Canning. I do not vouch for the authenticity of this story, but I mention it merely to illustrate the fact that Sheil gained a position as a parliamentary orator which could not have been won without effective claim to such a rank.

In the meanwhile, however, Sheil had been becoming more and more identified with British rule, and Ireland had been growing more and more practically Nationalist. One of the first manifest and definite results of this growth of national feeling was shown when, at a General Election, Sheil stood again as representative of the Borough of Dungarvan in Ireland, of which he had already been the sitting member. He was defeated by an Irish Nationalist and Catholic, a true and trusted champion of Ireland's claims for justice, John Francis Maguire, and Maguire won a decisive victory. Sheil was then, no doubt as a consolation for his defeat, endowed by the Government with a position as diplomatic

representative at a Continental Court, and in that capacity his brilliant life came to a close.

Maguire continued to be for many years a member of the House of Commons, and always remained a staunch supporter of the Irish National cause, while at the same time a resolute opponent of every policy and movement which tended towards armed insurrection. Maguire held his course not because he was by any means an advocate, as the phrase was commonly used in those days, of peace at any price, but for the reason that he felt convinced there was no human possibility of Ireland's being able to make good her stand against the forces of England in the open field, and he had no hope of any enduring benefit to come to Ireland, even if her insurrectionary attempt were to have the support of some European or other power hostile to England. Such an alliance, were it to prove entirely victorious on the part of the foreign power, would only, Maguire felt satisfied, end in making Ireland a vassal of the victor, or handing her back to England on some conditions satisfactory to that victor, and having nothing to do with the freedom and prosperity of Ireland.

Maguire's hopes for Ireland's recovery of her self-governing Irish Parliament under happier conditions than it could command during its previous existence, were founded altogether on the strength of peaceful argument, of appeals to the

growing intelligence and spirit of justice throughout the British public, through the methods of constitutional and parliamentary agitation. Such had no doubt been the policy of Daniel O'Connell, and that policy had achieved much during its course, but it had made little progress so far as the demand for the repeal of the legislative union was concerned. A revolutionary era, spreading over the European continent, had shot some of its flame over Ireland; many Irishmen had grown impatient of the O'Connell movement, and the result was a futile effort at rebellion.

John Francis Maguire was one of the most prominent and influential leaders of the return, under somewhat altered conditions, to the old policy of constitutional and parliamentary agitation. For a time at least that policy proclaimed its absolute distrust of any Liberal Government which did not declare itself in favour of repeal of the Union. The influence of that policy grew and grew, until before long it had come to be the feeling of all Irish Nationalists that the mere fact of a man's being a habitual supporter of a Whig Government must condemn him to be regarded as an opponent to the claim of the country for Repeal of the Union.

Under these conditions the new national movement began to have a greater influence on the Irish constituencies, and a candidate was regarded as undeserving the support of a constituency if he

did not make advocacy of Repeal the main principle of his parliamentary career. The anti-Irish Irishman, as such a personage was then considered, began to be unpopular with the Irish constituencies, and, indeed, with the Irish people in general, except in the case of that large and influential minority who still recognised the authority of Dublin Castle, and coveted the social patronage given by the Lord-Lieutenant.

The Nationalist newspapers became more influential and popular than ever, and as the rising literary talent of the country became increasingly identified with the cause of Repeal, these newspapers always gave a good return, intellectually, for the support which they received. The journalism of Ireland began, so far as influence was concerned, to be divided between the organs of Nationalism and the organs of extreme, antiquated Toryism, while the papers which endeavoured to hold to the middle course, the course of modern Whigism, soon came to count for little or nothing. Ireland had, indeed, but two parties, the Nationalists and the Tories. The landlords as a rule subscribed for and read the Tory journals, while the great majority of the reading public supported the Nationalist newspapers.

At this time the journals of all kinds were still under the restrictive and oppressive influence of the Government's stamp, every news-

paper having as a condition of its publication to pay to the Government the fine, as it might well be called, which was represented by the stamp impressed on its front, an exaction inflicted on the newspaper Press of the kingdom, which was not abolished until many years after that time.

Meanwhile, the condition of Ireland was on the whole remarkably tranquil, so far as regarded any political disturbances of public order and peace. There were almost unceasing troubles in the agricultural districts, caused by the oppressive influence of the land laws, the evictions of tenants, and the efforts of the evicted to hold their land by force. But even with regard to the tenant population there was growing up a feeling everywhere throughout the country, a feeling strongly and consistently encouraged by the Nationalist newspapers, that Ireland must look to persistent political and parliamentary agitation as the surest and even the readiest means of obtaining redress for all the grievances under which she suffered.

The Repeal agitation soon took the name of agitation for Home Rule, and the first really powerful Irish Parliamentary Party formed since O'Connell's days was that which began under the leadership of Isaac Butt. Isaac Butt had at one time been an uncompromising opponent of O'Connell. He was a Protestant and an extreme Tory, but he was also a thorough Irishman, a



Photo

ISAAC BUTT.

[W. Lawrence, Dublin.]

scholar, a thinker, a writer ; he was for some years editor of the “*Dublin University Magazine*,” and had also filled the chair of Professor of Political Economy in the University of Dublin. He was all the time a most successful advocate, and was engaged in the defence of Smith O’Brien and Thomas Francis Meagher after the unsuccessful attempt at rebellion in 1848.

Perhaps it may have been the intimate knowledge that Butt obtained during this trial of the sufferings of Ireland from unjust legislation that first brought to his intellect and his sympathy a just conception of the Irish Nationalist claims. At all events, it is certain that he became a fervent champion of Ireland’s political cause, and that in the House of Commons he founded and became leader of what was thenceforward described as the Home Rule Party.

I cannot follow this part of my Irish recollections much farther, because they would of necessity soon cease to be early memories of mine, and would bring me to the time when, owing to altered conditions of life, I had ceased to have an Irish home.

During the interval between the movement led by O’Connell and that led by Butt a considerable change had taken place in the temperament and demeanour of Irish Nationalism. The national sentiment remained, indeed, quite unaltered, as it ever had been, a sentiment

of unalloyed devotion to the cause of Ireland's self-government. But in the interval between, let us say, 1848 and the formation of the Home Rule Party in the House of Commons, there had grown up among Irish Nationalists at home and abroad a much more general and clearly defined recognition of the fact that Ireland's most suitable and hopeful battle-ground for the assertion and the maintenance of her claims to self-government was to be found on the floor of the House of Commons, and in absolute independence of every British Ministry. Ireland had learned that nothing but immediate disaster was to come from hasty attempts at rebellion in the field, and had also learned that nothing but immediate disappointment of some kind was likely to come from any attempted alliance with a British political party, and from any acceptance of office under a British Prime Minister.

I have to say at the same time, that during this interval there had grown up in Ireland, and even among large numbers of Irish Nationalists in various walks of life, a certain inclination to try the chance of a movement secretly organised and spreading itself among Irishmen in England and Scotland and Wales as well as in Ireland itself. Of course, there had been at all periods since the Act of Union certain secret societies springing up in Ireland and making successive and abortive movements towards this or that

reform in the political or agricultural system of the country, but these movements had received hardly any support from any but the unlettered part of the community.

The tendency towards secret association in the days with which I am now dealing—the days, that is, between repeal and Home Rule—began to assume a somewhat different character, and to present certain attractions for young men who had acquired something of culture. Some at least of this attraction was due to the fact that secret societies were springing up in many parts of the Continent, where absolute despotic sway, sway attained in some countries, as in France, by downright usurpation, had led to the formation of secret societies, in which men of the highest intellect and culture took influential part.

Among many sets of the young men throughout Ireland there came up a sudden impulse towards the formation of such organisations, professing, although in a very vague way, the preparations of plans for new attempts at insurrection on behalf of the freedom of Ireland. These mysterious projects came to nothing, and I am only introducing them into my chapter because they form a characteristic feature of the perplexed times, and carry with them no tragical recollections.

I can call to mind one of those societies in the south of Ireland in which I and numbers of my

young friends and companions were enrolled as members. It was, so far as I recollect, the first attempt of any one among my group of friends to take part in a conspiracy for the purpose of organising a rebellion in the open field. Our projects, I must say, were indeed rather indefinite, and we seemed to have troubled ourselves much more about what I might call the pictorial or dramatic mechanism of our institution, its signs, its passwords, its arrangements of ranks and orders and discipline, than with any projects as to the time, the method, and the scene of our first outbreak or the accumulation of weapons enough and the acquirement of military skill enough to give serious trouble to the military authorities under the control of Dublin Castle.

I fully believe the great majority of our members would, if the occasion had been given to them, have risked their lives in an encounter with those forces, if any such grim opportunity had put us to the test. Several of the young men who belonged to the society afterwards went to the United States and risked their lives, and some of them lost their lives, in fighting under their countryman General Thomas Francis Meagher for the cause of the North.

But while we were all still playing our part in our supposed-to-be-secret society, we never, so far as I can recollect, prepared any definite scheme for the opening of our first campaign. Several

of our band were at that time studying in lawyers' offices for a call to the bar, or preparing to become solicitors, and several of them did afterwards enter the legal profession and rise to distinction in it. Others gave themselves up, when their hopes and dreams of rebellion were over, to newspaper work or literary work, but I cannot remember that any novel telling of patriotic uprising and gallant battle for fatherland ever came from the pen of one of my companions.

All this was before the era of those later, and much more serious and definitely organised conspiracies, which spread so widely in a sort of secrecy among Irishmen at home and abroad, such as, for instance, the Fenian Movement, which might at any moment have been brought into serious conflict against English rule in Ireland, a movement which would have had much support from Irishmen in all parts of the United States.

The plain fact is that the influence of all these secret societies, large or small, positive and determined or merely fanciful and dramatic, was gradually weakened by the growing strength and improved organisation of the Irish Parliamentary Movement, and by the conviction which at length came to be forced upon the minds of intelligent Englishmen that Ireland had a just cause to struggle for, and that her claims must have a full and fair consideration alike as regarded

her system of land tenure, and the system enforced upon her of political rule, which she was compelled by mere strength of military authority to endure. The well-disciplined and persistent action of the Home Rule Party in the House of Commons seemed to send the light of a new hope and a new confidence into the Irish Nationalists at home and abroad, and to win them away from further experiments in secret society organisation.

The decaying influence of Moore and his melodies had not carried with it any decay in the general influence of music and song throughout Ireland. The Young Ireland minstrelsy was to be heard everywhere, in all parts of the island where the spirit of nationality was an animating power. Almost all the young Irish men and women whom I then knew were devotees of music and of song. Most of my friends and companions could sing well, and many could play on some musical instrument. Some of them had very fine voices, and most expressive intonation—I could judge of them without envy, for I never could sing, and so was brought into no effort at rivalry. The flute was the most popular instrument amongst them, probably because it needed no such severe and scientific study as the violin in order to accomplish a moderately attractive display. We had amongst us some young men and young women who afterwards adopted the

musical profession and won some distinction in concert or opera. But we all alike loved music, and sought every opportunity of proving our love. Comic songs were very popular, and Samuel Lover had given to his young countrymen opportunities enough for testing their capacity in that order of vivacious melody. Lover, like Moore, had settled in England, and was making money and reputation there many years before that time, but he made frequent visits to Ireland, and I heard him sing his own songs many times there.

Since the uprise of the Young Ireland Party and "The Nation," most of the songs we heard belonged to that period of Irish history, and were genuine echoes of that genuine spirit of what might be called combative nationalism which then possessed the youth of the country. I mention these facts only to impress upon the minds of my readers that the decay in the influence of Moore represented no change in our estimate of Moore's poetic genius, but only showed that we were entering upon a new epoch in Ireland's history, and that the songs which were to be popular must breathe the spirit of that epoch.

Music entered into all our social and festive enjoyments. If a group of young men got up a river excursion, or went for a holiday on the sea, they were sure, when the day's pastime

was over, to settle down to dinner at some convenient hostelry, and the dinner was certain to be followed by the drinking of toasts and the singing of songs. Any young man who had given us one such mellifluous effusion was understood to be endowed with the right of calling on any other member of the company to favour us with a musical effort of his own, and so it went on until the festivity came to an end, and even longer than that, for the voices of our companions could be heard in many a delightful melody along the darkening way to our several homes. I may say that although we greatly enjoyed genuine comic songs, yet I can never remember any occasion on which a song which brought in coarseness or indecency of any kind was heard in our gladsome and entirely self-ordered revelries.

I have already said that in my native City of Cork, the young men and women with whom I came into most frequent association were all accustomed to regard themselves as poets. I wish I could say that my memory and my experience enabled me to claim justification for many, or, indeed, for any of these assumptions, but I cannot venture to assert that any one of us has inscribed his or her name on the roll of the world's poets. It is certain that a great many of us wrote poems which were thought good enough to be published by the editors of newspapers, and even of critical and censorious magazines.

There was one friend of mine in Cork, a friend of much maturer years than mine, and long since passed out of life, who I then thought and still think, possessed the happiest art of rendering foreign verses into a perfectly equivalent English translation, equivalent in meaning, in rhythm, and in charm. He had, in fact, a conviction that it is quite possible to accomplish a literal translation which shall thus be the living foreign poem metamorphosed into living English form. Other writers of that time, some of whom were known to us in Cork, had won high reputation by translations of foreign poems, which did indeed convey the full meaning, and much of the beauty of the originals, but were rendered so freely as to have a measure and a style entirely their own, and were free, even very free translations. My friend, the literal translator, did contrive to carry out his theory with marvellous fidelity, and with equally marvellous artistic success. At that time two foreign poets much admired by us young Irishmen were Beranger the Frenchman, and Freiligrath the German. Our translator rendered what might have seemed to be some of the most difficult as well as the most delightful ballads of these two poets in a manner which, while reproducing all the charms of verse, of measure, of imaginative force and beauty, gave us an English translation which was a literal interpretation of the French or German original.

We were all very cordial admirers of some of the translations from French poems by Father Prout, but we all had to admit that these were very free renderings, and that while they gave us some idea of the beauty and the spirit of the originals, they had little resemblance to those originals in construction. Most of us, therefore, greatly preferred the versions wrought by our friend, which showed the English reader, and the Irish reader as well, exactly what the foreign poems were in their own living form. I much fear that the very name of this translator is but little known to Irishmen of the present generation. He was then a writer, mostly on literary subjects, for newspapers and magazines, and had won for himself a distinct position, which we all hoped and fully believed would be lasting. He was a most accomplished scholar, was delightful in conversation, and especially loved to draw out, encourage and guide any youths who came within his range, and who seemed to him to have promise of literary gifts. I may mention, perhaps, that his name was William Dove, and it is quite possible that the name may still call back to many memories in Ireland a career which once seemed destined to celebrity, and in later years had faded into something like forgetfulness.

I have sometimes been inclined to ask myself whether time, mere time, has in itself the absolute and final right to silence the voice of fame. One

of the younger men, much younger than William Dove, wrote then, and afterwards, a large number of poems which were accepted and published in many London as well as Irish magazines. Only a few years ago, he was invited by a Dublin publisher to bring out a collection of his poems in volume form. The author felt the full force of the compliment, but he was not won over by the invitation. As he put it himself, “If my poems were really worth publication in a volume, they would most assuredly have published themselves long before this day.” The author apparently recognised the right of time to approve or to silence the voice of fame.

IRELAND'S NEW INSPIRATION



Photo]

[*W. Lawrence, Dublin.*

DANIEL O'CONNELL.

CHAPTER VI

IRELAND'S NEW INSPIRATION

THE Irish rebellion of 1848 began in what might be fairly described as a new literary inspiration. There had been among Irishmen during successive centuries the same desire and the same demand for a recognition of Ireland's separate and distinct nationality, and, therefore, the possession of national self-government. There had been armed uprisings against English domination at all periods of English rule, but in many cases the uprisings had their immediate cause in some new enactment of legislative oppression, which forced on Irishmen the need of an armed protest against such measures.

After the complete suppression of the '98 rebellion the national movement took the form of a political agitation, which disavowed and discouraged all efforts to maintain the national demand by force of arms. The demand was indeed truly national, for it must be remembered that it was not in any sense confined to any one religious sect or faith, but was maintained by Irish Protestants as well as by Irish Catholics. In the '98 rebellion Protestants like

Lord Edward Fitzgerald and Theobald Wolfe Tone, and many others, were among the most conspicuous and the most influential leaders. Later came the long agitation promoted and led by Daniel O'Connell, which repudiated any idea of armed rebellion, indeed, proclaimed anathema against all attempt to restore Irish nationality by force of arms, and thus made for itself an entirely new chapter in Ireland's history.

O'Connell was a man sincerely and absolutely devoted to the cause of Irish nationality, and to the movement for the restoration of Ireland's parliament. But he was a man endowed with the gift of strong common sense, and, on the other hand, with a certain vein of romantic sentiment. He fully believed that Ireland's cause could be won by political and parliamentary action, and at the same time he had what might almost be called a sentimental horror of the shedding of blood in mere rebellious experiments. He carried the country with him for a long time, and made a distinct impression on the minds of many enlightened and progressive Englishmen.

As the years went on, and there seemed no prospect of any parliamentary success for Ireland's national demands, the younger men throughout Ireland began to grow more and more discontented with the peaceful political agitation, and less and less hopeful of any practical result. Then, when at last O'Connell began to preach the doctrine that

no success in political life could be worth the shedding of one drop of blood, the great majority of his younger supporters found that this was too much for their acceptance, and a great secession from O'Connell's followers took place, and there sprang into existence the Young Ireland Party, which led to the unsuccessful rebellion of 1848.

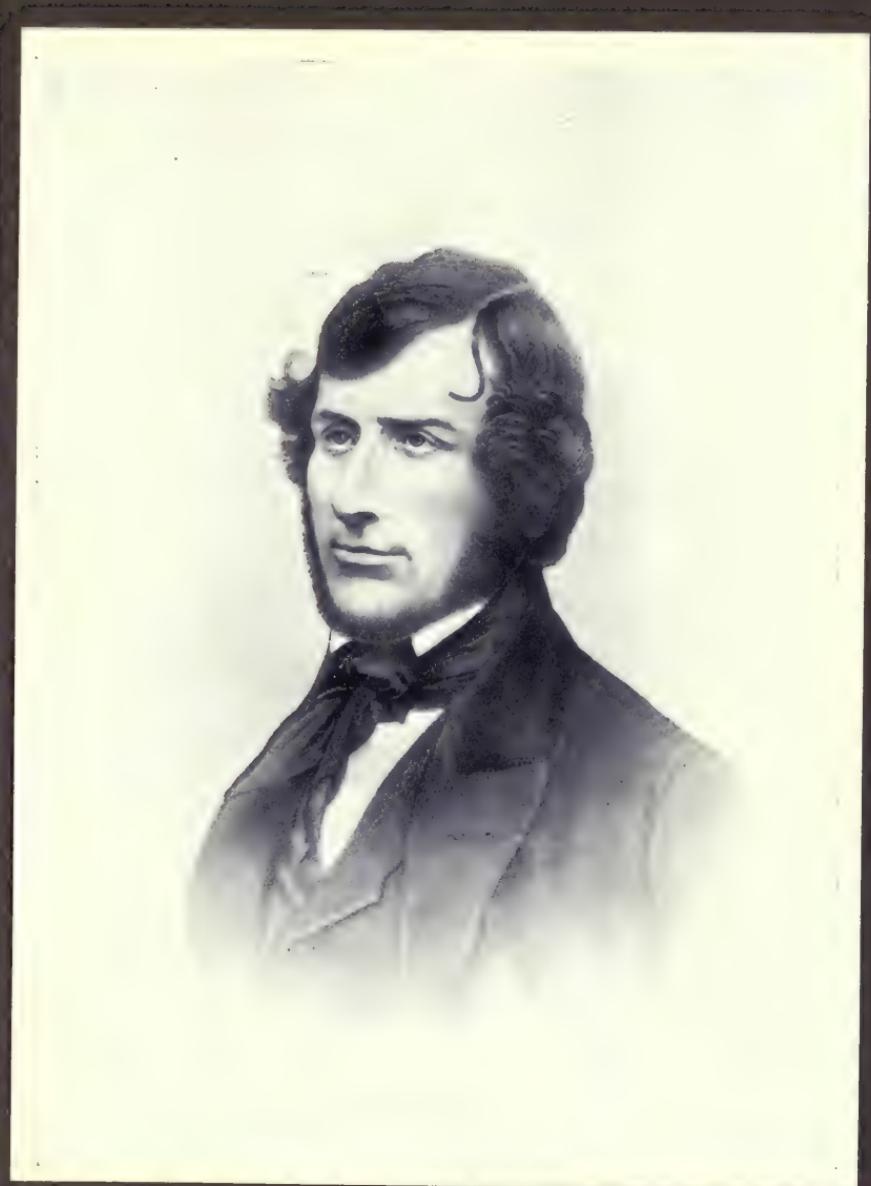
That rebellion, as I have said, was led up to by the inspiration of a new form of national literature. Poems and ballads were composed by disciples of the Young Ireland Party, and newspapers were published in the principal cities and towns which proclaimed the doctrines of the party in brilliant and thrilling prose. I was then a youth, just emerging from mere boyhood, and I felt an enthusiastic admiration for some of the writings published in these journals. I have, moreover, studied many of these writings during my maturer, and indeed very much maturer years, and am still well convinced that English literature contains no finer specimen of prose inspired by political emotion than are to be found in many of these Young Ireland journals.

John Mitchel was one of the most brilliant and the most enthusiastic of the Young Ireland writers during that time. He had been a contributor to the leading columns of "The Nation," a weekly journal, published and edited by Charles Gavan Duffy, who afterwards won for himself

a distinct celebrity in Australia, and rose to high reputation as a colonial servant of the British Crown. Mitchel, however, found that Duffy's political doctrines as represented by "The Nation" were somewhat too slow and too pacific for his own temperament and inclinations, and he set to work with the object of creating what might be described as an irreconcilable Nationalist Party in Ireland.

So far as my memory serves me, I believe that the youthful Nationalists of that time did not understand that Mitchel would be satisfied with the granting or the restoring of a parliament to Ireland, but that he was going in for absolute separation between the two countries, Ireland to be entirely her own mistress. This was an idea which touched the hearts of all or nearly all the younger Nationalists, and even in many cases found a welcome among the elders.

There was a distinct vein of the poetic thrilling through all the writings of Mitchel, although he never set up for being a poet. "All my life long," he wrote in one of his articles, "I have loved rivers, and poets who sang of rivers," and then followed a passage of picturesque suggestiveness alive with poetic feeling. Young Ireland had also its professed and recognised poets, not a few of whom have bequeathed their works and their names to literature. The passion of national feeling was much stimulated by the



Photo

[W. Lawrence, Dublin.]

JOHN MITCHELL.

peculiar eloquence of Thomas Francis Meagher, who was beyond question a genuine orator of the redundant and the ornate style, especially qualified to captivate the minds and the hearts of young men, and to become a sort of prophetic guidance to them. I shall not endeavour to give my readers of the present day anything like a critical appreciation of Meagher's claims to celebrity as an orator, but rather to convey to their minds some idea of the impression which his speeches and their style of eloquence made on the mind of his sympathetic audiences.

The immediate effect of these various influences was that the Nationalism of Young Ireland did not concern itself much with any process of calculation as to the values of rival forces, as to Ireland's means for carrying on a successful struggle against the strength of Great Britain, or even as to the likelihood of Young Ireland being able to raise anything like a force strong enough to maintain itself for a month on a battle-field against the utterly outnumbering and well-armed and disciplined British troops.

The result of all this was the precipitate attempt at a rebellion under the leadership or nominal leadership of William Smith O'Brien, which began and ended in what has been called the battle of Ballingarry. My conviction is that the Young Ireland struggle was influenced altogether by a patriotic emotion, which was at the same time

poetic and imaginative, and which took but little account, if any, of practical considerations, material calculations, and the comparison of arithmetical numbers. We Irish Nationalists were all very young in those days, whatever the actual number of our years may have been, most of us were indeed very young even in years, and we followed the spirit of patriotic romance whither it might lead us. I look back upon those distant days with genuine sympathy and admiration.

In more recent days the Fenian Brotherhood, which was for so many years an organisation of Irishmen at home and abroad against England's dominion over Ireland, owed much of its influence to its name, by which it became associated with some of the most heroic figures in Ireland's earliest legends and poems. But the Fenian agitation does not belong to my early memories of Ireland, but to a period of my life which could hardly be called early, and when indeed I was no longer living in Ireland. The love of Irish historical legend and historical poem was very instinct in the national heart.

There was nothing in the Irish National Movement, it must be borne in mind, directly associated with the religious creed held by the vast majority of the Irish people. The leaders of the rebellion of 1798, as I have said already in this chapter, were most of them like Wolfe

Tone and Lord Edward Fitzgerald, members of the Established Protestant Church, and in the agitation which led up to the abortive attempt of 1848 Smith O'Brien and John Mitchel and many others belonged to the same denomination, or were members of religious dissenting bodies. The whole of the Fenian movement was condemned by a Papal proclamation issued from the Vatican of Rome, although no doubt the movement was joined in by large numbers of Irishmen at home and in the American States and Canada professing the faith of that Church. These facts cannot be too distinctly impressed upon the ordinary British reader, who is still only too well inclined to regard the political movements in Ireland as movements of Catholic against Protestant, and thus to misinterpret altogether their political and national significance.

There must have been at that time numberless intelligent and educated English men and women, who, if they had only given their serious attention to the whole subject, would have discovered that there was a deep and genuine cause underlying all these upheavings of Irish national agitations. Soon, however, the Irish national cause began to receive an entirely new strength and support from the other side of the Atlantic. The famine had created an immense rush of emigration from Ireland to the United States. The population of the island, which had already been much reduced

by mere famine, began to be reduced in far greater proportion by the flow of emigration.

From every town and village, young men who could raise means enough to pay for a deck passage to some American port, and still have a few coins in pocket on their landing there, were finding their way to the new world in utter despair of ever being able to make a prosperous living in their native country. Many a farmer sold off the whole of his worldly possessions, if he had any worth selling, his cows and his sheep and his pigs, in order to take his wife and children to that land across the sea where his countrymen already exiled told him that every man who could work would be able to find remunerative work to do. Shopkeepers in various towns sold off all their goods and household furniture, and started on the same promising voyage of discovery. From all parts of the United States Irishmen at home were continually receiving letters from friends already settled in America, assuring them that, in the language of Lady Dufferin's poem, there was "bread and work for all" in every region of the great Republic.

I can well recall that thrilling time, so full of sad partings, and yet ever illumined by such bright hopes. I remember what numbers of young men from my own city joined in this quest across the Atlantic for a career of success, or at least for a life of comfort,

which seemed absolutely denied to them in their native land. My own and only brother, Francis McCarthy, "Frank," as we always called him, was one of the first to set out in quest of success in what seemed then, to all of us, the new land of promise in the far west. His mother and his brother and sister were sad indeed at the prospect of losing him so soon, but we would not have thought of endeavouring to prevail upon him to remain with us, and were filled with hope that he might find some career opened to him in the new world, of which there seemed very slender chance indeed in poor old Ireland.

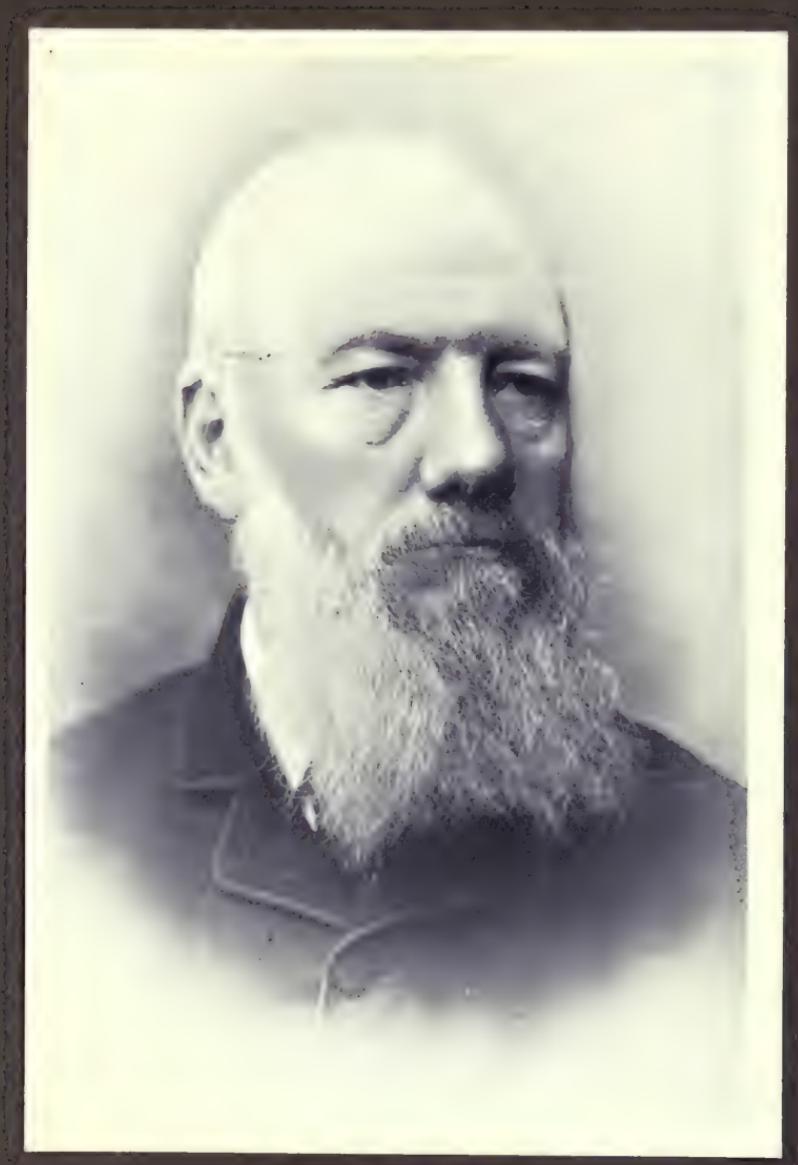
I may say at once that Frank did not meet with any very brilliant success in the United States, but he was always able to make a comfortable living there; he became the happy husband of an intellectual, variously gifted and loving American woman, the father of two sons who have already risen to distinction in the service of New York State, and the owner of a genial home on the New Jersey shore, where in later years I visited him often during my three visits to the United States, the first of which occupied about two years, and the second and third nearly a year each.

To return, however, to my early memories, I may mention the fact that one of my boyhood's companions who went out to America at the same time as my brother was Joseph Brenan. He

was one of the most brilliant youths then known to the political and literary circles of our native city, Cork, a poet, a gifted journalist, a brilliant Young Ireland orator, and patriot. Brenan won for himself much distinction in the United States, and married happily, but, stricken down by a cruel malady, closed all too early that life of much promise and much performance. Not many years ago I received a very welcome visit from his daughter, a nun of one of the Catholic orders in the States, now a mature woman, and wearing the picturesque garb of her order.

The early emigration kept on increasing more and more in the region to which I belonged ; it was much assisted by the generous efforts of an Irishman, who had sought and found a successful career in the United States long before the first rush of emigration from Ireland had set in. He had come to hold an influential position in one of the great steamship companies carrying passengers and traffic between Europe and New York, and in his frequent visits to Cork he made himself a positive benefactor to the young men of the city by assisting them to find comfortable passages at moderate rates in steamers belonging to his company. My own brother was one of those to whom he showed this very welcome kindness.

The rush of emigration did not continue after a few years to hold its course with an



THOMAS CROSBIE.

equal outpouring force, but never since that time has come a year when there was not a steady outflow of Irish emigrants to the hospitable shores of the United States. Great numbers of my countrymen had become naturalized in the States, and have risen to high distinction in political and civil administration, literary and newspaper work. Literature finds larger remuneration in America than in Europe, and, indeed, at the present day every writer of books in England as well as in Ireland regards as an important part of his income the recompense which he receives from the United States for his literary work, since the establishment of the copyright regulations between the Old World and the New.

The Irish Nationalist Party in the House of Commons receive the most valuable and never-failing support from the Irishmen settled in the United States, and my countrymen on the other side of the Atlantic watch with intense and truly patriotic interest every movement made in Westminster by the National Party pledged to the cause of Home Rule.

I can well remember the sensation created in Ireland when my dear old friend John Francis Maguire, who for a long time had a seat in the House of Commons as a Home Ruler, published some forty years ago his work "The Irish in America." He was then believed, even by many

of his own friends, to have been extravagantly enthusiastic in his anticipation of the benefits which the Irish emigration to the United States was destined to have on the advancement of Ireland's great political cause. During the course of more recent years, we have only received more and more evidence that Maguire had formed a well-founded judgment as to the growth of Irish influence in the States themselves, and the effect of that influence on the great home struggle for the restoration of Ireland's national self-government. Nor is there any evidence whatever to suggest that such an influence is likely to decrease or to degenerate as the days go on.

I may here say a few words about John Francis Maguire, to whom I owe much gratitude for the kind and generous favour he showed to me in my early years. He knew my family and he knew me, and he formed the impression that I was a boy with some capacity for literary work, and he offered me a position on the reporting staff of the paper which he then, and until his death long after, both owned and edited, the "Cork Examiner." I had not any knowledge of shorthand, but he undertook to have me instructed at his own cost in that somewhat difficult technical accomplishment, and in the meantime to keep me in daily occupation in the offices of the journal, and to test for himself how I was getting on in my shorthand studies. All this preliminary work

was got through, and I then became a regular member of the "Examiner's" staff, a position which I held for many years after.

Maguire was a man of many remarkable qualities. He was tall and strongly built, was an accomplished athlete, and a master of all manly exercises. Even before the coming up of the Young Ireland orators and writers, he saw quite clearly that O'Connell's system of agitation had reached its highest mark and that the Repeal of the Union was only to be attained by parliamentary tactics of a more active, and, if I may use the expression, a more aggressive nature.

The conviction growing on the Nationalist mind of Ireland just then was that the Repeal Party must not make itself the servant of any government, however fair-spoken a government might seem to be, and especially must not take office in any British administration.

Maguire was one of the first public men in Ireland to give that new turn to the Nationalist movement which made it the opponent of every English administration refusing its attention to the demand for Home Rule in Ireland. He was a strict teetotaller, and one of the most devoted and influential followers of Father Mathew. He had a chivalrous, impulsive nature, and it made him a kind of Don Quixote in any passing controversies which seemed to put the weak at the mercy of the strong. I remember hearing him

once say in his familiar, humorous fashion, “ You must not give me too much credit for unselfish chivalry, because, you see, I have the comfort of knowing that I am stronger than ninety-nine men out of every hundred whom I should be likely to meet in a long day’s walk.”

Maguire held to his unselfish principle of action during the whole of his political career, and thus, of course, sacrificed the opportunities which he must otherwise have had of accepting well-paid offices under a Liberal Government. He had a most happy gift of story-telling, and might have sat as a typical figure for some roystering Irish sporting man in one of Charles Lever’s earlier romances, if it were not for the fact that he never tasted wine or spirit of any kind, and that he was a sincere opponent to all forms of sport which promoted or included the suffering of animals. The “ Cork Examiner ” he founded is flourishing in Cork at the present day.

One of the earliest and dearest friends of my boyhood and youth, and of my much more mature years, began, as I have already said, his newspaper work just as I had done in the offices of “ The Cork Examiner.” John Francis Maguire, who had been a friend to Thomas Crosbie as to me, died comparatively young, and Thomas Crosbie, who had risen to be editor of the paper, succeeded, after Maguire’s death, in becoming the chief owner.

I have sometimes thought, in fanciful moods, of writing an account of men I have known who had in them distinct qualities of greatness, and who yet came to comparatively nothing. I do not suppose that I shall ever bring out such a work, but if by some strange chance I should do so I must certainly give a conspicuous place in that history to my dear old friend Thomas Crosbie. Even in his early youth he showed brilliant literary capacity, and a sincere love for literature in all its forms. He was one of the best educated young men I have ever known, and his was, almost altogether, self-education. He could read fluently Latin and Greek, French, German, and Italian, and he had never been to any college or any really great school, and had been a companion of mine at that first school which I entered, and where, as I have stated in my "*Story of an Irishman*," I learned absolutely nothing.

But Crosbie had a genuine thirst for information of every kind, especially literary, historical, and artistic, and he had a retentive memory, and a keen eye for all beauty of landscape and sea and sky. Of course, his newspaper work soon came to occupy the greater part of his life, but it never wholly absorbed him, and he always kept his mind and his eyes open to other mental impressions and to other images besides those which came up in what may be called

the official course of his life. He had, like most young Irishmen of his time, a great love for music and song, and he was a capital singer, and could give the most expressive tone to pathetic or to comic verses. He never even tried to be an orator, but he was remarkably effective and happy as an extemporaneous speaker on a political platform, or at a public dinner.

I remember well the effect he created at such a dinner given in London not many years before his death, a banquet arranged by a great literary association in honour of a distinguished author, and at which many men of renown in literature and in political life were present and made speeches. Crosbie was called upon to respond to one of the toasts, and he delivered what I then regarded, and still regard, as one of the most brilliant, effective, and at the same time humorous after-dinner speeches I have ever heard, and I have attended many such gatherings during my time. I sat at that table between two eminent Englishmen, one a distinguished member of the House of Commons and the other a brilliant essayist, neither of whom had known anything of Thomas Crosbie previously, and neither of whom, probably, had ever heard of him before, and they both became quite enthusiastic over that unexpected display of eloquence and of humour.

Crosbie was often invited to accept a seat

for some Irish constituency in the House of Commons, but he never would consent to give up his work as a journalist, and his quiet life in Cork City. The only public position which, so far as I can remember, he ever consented to accept, was that of president, for one year, of the great Newspaper Press Association, which included representatives of journalism all over the world, where journalism is an institution, which held its annual meetings in great capital cities, each president only holding office for one year. Crosbie, the owner and editor of a journal published in Cork City, not Ireland's capital, was chosen as president of this great cosmopolitan association for a year, and he conducted its proceedings, which took place that year in Buda-Pesth, the capital of Hungary.

I have often talked with him over that most interesting event of his life, but I could not succeed in drawing him out much with regard to his personal share in the great meeting, and he would only give expression to his delight in the beauty of the noble city and its surroundings, a delight which I most cordially shared with him, for I have always regarded my own stay in Buda-Pesth as one of the brightest events of my life.

Tom Crosbie was a devoted lover of his country, and was proud of Ireland's history and literature, legend and ballad poetry, and had given his whole career as a journalist to the maintenance of

her claims for national self-government. He never tried to win any celebrity for himself, and never sought or accepted any manner of political or municipal office. All who knew him felt, I am sure, as I have ever done, some wonder at the fact that with all his gifts he never gained, or wished to gain, a place for his name among the names to be remembered, even in the history of his own country.

When Thomas Crosbie died several years ago, it was at a time when I, myself, was only just recovering from a very severe illness, the most severe and critical illness of my life, thus far, and my family took care that the sad news should be kept from me until I had recovered health and strength enough to bear up against the effect of the shock which must come upon me with the announcement that the dear old friend and comrade of mine, from my early boyhood, had passed away from this life.

DUBLIN CASTLE

CHAPTER VII

DUBLIN CASTLE

DUBLIN CASTLE may be taken as the architectural emblem of England's rule over Ireland. It might, perhaps, be regarded as a local and comical version of the Athenian Acropolis or the Pyramids of Egypt. There are not many poetic or heroic illustrations associated with its history. It represented in ages gone by the dominion of the conqueror as a central garrison might do, and in more modern days it typified the ascendancy of the rulers in aristocratic society and in fashion.

It is no part of my intention to retrace in these pages the story of Dublin Castle so far as regards its organisation and influence in the generations far antecedent to our own, nor shall I have much to say about it so far as relates to its political work in our own generation. It has in our present time lost, or voluntarily surrendered, much of its oppressive political power. One cannot now associate the presence of a Viceroy ruling at Dublin Castle with any idea of tyrannical dictatorship and the enforcement of arbitrary imprisonments or capricious exiles.

My purpose in this chapter is only to speak of Dublin Castle as it came within my own early memories of Ireland. It was even then, indeed, an institution entirely out of keeping with the principles and the characteristics of constitutional government and of a free people, but the Viceroy had even at that time come to recognise the fact that the House of Commons was a power in the land, and that the Irish Nationalist members were able to hold the attention of the public when they divided the House on some question raised by them as to this or that exercise of arbitrary power by the Lord-Lieutenant, and through his Castle officials.

The Viceroy and his Court still made their claims for supremacy very distinctly felt and effectively exercised them over the regions of rank and society and fashion. If in those days some ambitious head of an Irish family, not quite patrician in his origin, were filled with the desire to bring his wife and his sons and daughters into the inner circles of society, he knew well that there was little likelihood of his being able to accomplish such a feat unless he could first attract for them the favourable notice of the Lord-Lieutenant. Once introduced to the Castle the Dublin world might then be said to be all before him when he chose. Without that preliminary mark of recognition our aspirant must indeed have possessed some extraordinary charm

of wealth and influence in order to prevail upon the world of Dublin fashion to acknowledge the existence of himself and his family.

I need hardly tell my readers in general that among the qualities which won ready favour from Dublin Castle an avowed devotion to Ireland's national cause did not hold a place. Therefore the great question of Ireland's rights was made an especially inconvenient subject of domestic controversy in a family where the wife and the daughters were eager to be received into society and the father of the family had not quite shaken off his early devotion to that which he used to regard as the cause of his country. The ladies of such a family found it extremely inconvenient and vexatious that the male head of the household should pay any attention to the absurd goings-on of these Young Irelanders, with their meetings and their speeches and their poems and their bands and banners. While in the very street where these ladies were living the daughters of a family who had been school-fellows of theirs were presented the other day at the Viceregal Court, and were sure to be invited to all the balls and parties of the coming season. One may be allowed to feel a kind of pity for the paterfamilias thus brought into such domestic discomfort, and forced to choose between the Home Rule of the political platform and the Home Rule of the domestic petticoat.

Thus it came about that the ambition in certain circles throughout Ireland to be regarded as English rather than Irish in ancestry and bringing-up and general ways became a very common characteristic of many sections all over the country. The Viceroy and his household were most powerful agents in sustaining and promoting this sentiment, which, if it were not exactly anti-Irish, might certainly be described as refusing to identify itself with those merely Irish.

Of course, the great majority of the Irish people had nothing whatever to do with these strivings of social ambition. The rural population did not trouble their minds about the Castle festivities, and the street crowds in Dublin were only drawn towards the Castle when some ceremonial was going forward which brought into the open air a display of pageantry gratifying to the gaze of spectators. Even to the majority of the shop-keeping classes in the Irish metropolis there was little temptation held out by any chance of social recognition from the Viceregal occupants of Dublin Castle. But then, if the curious observer were to push his way somewhat higher among the mercantile and general trading orders of Dublin, he would soon find himself in the neighbourhood or in the society of families who made their living by the selling of goods, and who yet were able to win their way into the festal halls of the Vice-regal palace.

These ambitious and not wholly ungratified sets of Dublin citizens helped to increase the numbers of those who always endeavoured to convey the idea that although they themselves were born in Ireland, and even although their fathers and grandfathers may have had the same birthplace, yet they were somehow or other distinctly British in their origin, and could not be expected to identify themselves with the ways and the manners, or to adopt the accent of the mere Irish. The impartial observer often noticed with amusement that many or most of these foreign settlers had thoroughly adopted the accent of the mere Irish, and proclaimed their British origin with a pronunciation and accentuation which might have suited to perfection some comical Irish personage in the pages of Charles Lever or Samuel Lover.

One decided effect brought about by the habitudes of these professedly British aspirants to the recognition and the patronage of the Castle was to make the Nationalists more and more hostile to the influence of the Viceroy and his Court. More than one thoroughly high-minded and impartial Lord-Lieutenant or Chief Secretary, who had come over to Dublin in thorough sympathy with the just complaints of the Irish people and their representatives, had been suddenly chilled and even shocked by the unmistakable evidences of distrust, and of something almost

like hostility, which were shown to them by the native population and even by the parliamentary representatives of the Irish national cause.

I can myself recall to mind very clearly the instance of one English statesman of advanced Liberal politics who had personally rendered great services to Ireland during the Irish famine by the charitable efforts which he made in his own person and with his own money to mitigate the sufferings of the Irish poor during that memorable season. Several years later he had accepted the office of Chief Secretary under the Lord-Lieutenant of a Liberal Government, and was surprised and deeply pained to find that the Irish Nationalists, and among them their parliamentary representatives, kept absolutely away from him and from his official companions, and seemed to regard him as if he were an utter stranger who had come amongst them merely as an enemy to their cause, and pledged to do all he could for its repression.

It is quite easy to understand the feelings of surprise and disappointment which came up in the mind of the new Chief Secretary, but, on the other hand, it is quite easy for anyone who understands and realises the existing state of things to enter into the feelings of the Irish Nationalist population and their parliamentary representatives. Most of these well knew, and the national representatives

especially well knew, that however personally sympathetic, beneficent, and friendly a Lord-Lieutenant or a Chief Secretary might be, there was at least at that time no possibility of his being allowed by his Government to lend any actual countenance or favour, not to say actual support, to the cause of Home Rule, the one cause on which the Irish people had then mainly set its heart and mind.

Some of us young men at the time, and I dare-say a great many of our elders also, were in the habit of saying amongst each other that there would be a much better chance for Ireland if she were placed under the control of a Viceroy invested with absolutely despotic power. Such a man, it seemed to us, would have come over to the island, or at least might have come, with an inclination to study for himself the whole actual condition of the country ; might have studied the land systems and the landlord systems, which had been in existence for centuries there, and might also have considered for himself the effect which the Act of Union had wrought upon the great majority of the Irish population. He might have come to the conclusion that the land laws and systems were the main causes of Irish poverty, and that the Act of Union, and the consequent extinction of the Irish native parliament, was the chief cause of Irish disloyalty.

We had all studied the career of Lord Durham,

when he was sent out invested with almost dictatorial powers for the suppression of the rebellion in Canada, and we had seen how by his famous report recommending the creation of a national parliament for Canada he had succeeded in accomplishing for Canada a system of self-rule which had made her from that time forth not merely peaceful and prosperous, but also one of the most contented and loyal parts of the whole British Empire.

But we knew that no Viceroy ever had been sent to Ireland invested with authority to make such an inquiry for himself, and to propound a scheme of agricultural and political reform entirely according to his own observation and judgment and convictions. We knew that any such scheme, even if it were likely to be then proposed, would have been utterly shattered by the authority of the House of Lords, as, indeed, the Lords had done their best to do with regard to Lord Durham's scheme for Canada, and by the yet far greater influence and power of the large existing majority in the British House of Commons, where Ireland had yet but a small majority of friends, even including her own representatives, to give any support to such a stroke of beneficent despotism. Therefore we made up our minds to recognise the fact that the Viceregal Court was not in the true sense a political institution or even, in its own capacity, a political despotism,

but only a school of fashion, and an institution for the maintenance of old and the creation of new gentility. We young men, therefore, ceased to cherish any feeling of inveterate hostility to the Viceregal system, but merely felt that it was not an institution with which we could possibly have anything to do without leaving ourselves open to the assumption that we were abandoning our national principles, and were seeking to win the favour of the Lord-Lieutenant and his court.

Many years later than those days of which I am now writing I believe it is certain that John Morley, as he then was, now Lord Morley of Blackburn, when he came over to Ireland as Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant was surprised and disappointed on finding that members of the Irish National Party in the House of Commons could not accept any hospitality from him in his official position. Every one of the Irish National members knew perfectly well, and could not have failed to know, that John Morley had ever been the true friend of Ireland, and had even approved of the principles of Home Rule. But the Irish members did not know just at that time that Mr. Gladstone had determined upon recognising the justice of Ireland's claim to local self-government, and therefore did not feel free to identify themselves with the Irish policy of a new ministry which, however friendly and sincerely friendly some of its members might be,

had not yet publicly and definitely pledged itself to the recognition of Ireland's national claim.

All this is, however, a good deal in advance of those early memories with which I have hitherto for the most part been dealing, and I therefore return at once to those recollections of the Irish Viceroyalty when Dublin Castle was still regarded as an institution set up for the subjugation of Ireland's efforts, in whatever form, at the maintenance of her nationality.

Since I began the writing of this chapter a work has been published entitled "Dublin Castle and the Irish people," the author of which is Mr. R. Barry O'Brien. This work, which is very carefully prepared, is a complete history of the Irish Viceroyalty, and it is a history written with a purpose. Its object is to make it evident to the world in general, from its array of unquestionable facts, that the Irish Viceroyalty as it existed never could, even had it been so inclined, have done anything to reconcile the Irish people to that species of union with England which centuries of English rule had been endeavouring to force upon them. Mr. O'Brien's book is a very valuable contribution to the history of the present as well as the past, and I hope it may find many readers, and especially in England.

In the days of my early memories I was often very painfully impressed by the evidences which even a very casual study of the English, and

especially the London Press, convey to me of a strange misunderstanding throughout the English public generally with regard to the vague existing feeling of Irishmen towards Englishmen. There was evidently, throughout England, a very common conviction that Irishmen, whether at home or abroad, were filled with a distrust of the whole English people generally, and a conviction that the most sincere and generous effort made by Englishmen to improve Ireland's condition would be met by Irishmen with nothing but distrust and repulsion.

Now I know well at the time from my own experience that, on the contrary, we, the Irishmen of Young Ireland, were accustomed to welcome with genuine enthusiasm any indication of generous and friendly feeling towards Ireland made by an Englishman of any rank or class. We knew well, and thoroughly welcomed the knowledge, that since Ireland could not hope to fight her battle for herself, her only chance of an early recognition of her national rights must come from the rising intelligence, and, therefore, the growing good feeling of the English people.

I can well remember, too, that those of my fellow-countrymen with whom I was most closely and habitually associated did not look with any especial hopefulness or sympathy towards such an organisation, for example, as that

of the English Chartists. I know that large classes of Englishmen had grown into the habit of looking upon every Irish political and popular movement as something merely disorderly and revolutionary, intended to subvert every legally established system of political government, and not troubling itself in the least to consider what substitute it was intended to set up in its place. Nothing could be a more thorough misunderstanding of a general sentiment on political questions which then prevailed throughout Young Ireland.

What we demanded and desired was, first and foremost, the restoration to Ireland of her right to rule her own affairs and within her own island boundaries. The Young Irish Nationalists thoroughly appreciated England's immense superiority in military strength and resource, and we knew our history well enough to remember how even when the great Napoleon was induced by various motives to take up our cause, and to attempt the occupation of Ireland by an expedition under the guidance of our brilliant and devoted Irish hero, Wolfe Tone, the whole enterprise proved a complete disaster to Ireland's hopes, and to some of her most devoted patriots. The hopeless attempt at rebellion in 1848 had been made because some of the then leaders of the National movement had been driven into utter despair of any good result

to come of parliamentary and constitutional action, and preferred risking all on a last and desperate attempt at rebellion than passively submitting to the edicts of superior power.

A like explanation could be given of the organisations of secret political conspiracy which were spreading among Irishmen at home and abroad during the years which followed the failure of the Young Ireland movement. Irishmen were forced to see that in the House of Commons the whole body of the Conservative Party was directly and persistently opposed to the Irish national claims, and that a very considerable proportion of the then Liberals still regarded it as part of their duty to oppose an agitation which, according to their judgment, only led to abortive efforts at rebellion. An Irish Lord-Lieutenant counted for little or nothing in the struggle of parties, so far as the destinies of Ireland were concerned. If he were a man of enlightenment, who endeavoured to follow out the promptings of his enlightenment, and to make a penetrating inquiry into the actual causes of Ireland's discontents, he must soon find out that he was absolutely powerless to prevail against the combined influence of Tories and Liberals in the House of Commons and the immense majority of the House of Lords.

Dublin Castle, therefore, settled down to be merely a social institution for the Irish capital

and the larger provincial cities. The time came when it ceased to arouse any warm or active feeling of hostility even among the Irish Nationalists, for the good reason that it was ceasing to be regarded as a political institution, and that the Irish Nationalists did not care in the least about it as a leader of fashion. The great majority of the Nationalists were not much under the dominion of fashion's edicts; and although the Irish National cause had at all times among its open and proclaimed supporters some men who belonged to the patrician and the landlord class, these men were by their own position quite independent of Dublin Castle favours, even if they had been in the slightest degree inclined to accept any such complimentary attentions.

Travellers visiting Ireland began to regard the Castle as a sort of old-fashioned curiosity, which had nothing in it particularly venerable or in the higher sense historical, but belonging somewhat to the order of Temple Bar, or the Mansion House in London. Many published writings brought out by such visitors illustrated this idea, as to the recognised character of the Viceregal institution and its representative edifice. All manner of anecdotes began to appear in print, having for their object to promulgate this comic version of the Irish Viceregal institution.

I may mention two specimens of this species

of anecdote. One was told in the first instance by a distinguished Irishman not now living, who had been among my earliest friends in the City of Cork, and about whom I shall have another anecdote in a later chapter. He afterwards entered the House of Commons as a Conservative member, and had by his ability in political life attracted the notice and the admiration of Disraeli. When Prime Minister, Disraeli appointed my friend to be the Governor over one of England's great foreign possessions. After having held several such appointments of increasing importance, my friend returned to England, gave up official life, and again became a member of the House of Commons, this time as one of the representatives of the National cause. He used to tell the story of his first visit to Dublin after his return from abroad, and how he went to attend a reception held by the Lord-Lieutenant in Dublin Castle. He had given his name to the official who had charge of the admissions to the Viceroy's reception room, and was under the impression that he had made his identity quite clear. The official, however, still seemed disposed to bar his progress, and at last explained his difficulty by the words, "What I want to know is whether you are a sir, sir ? "

There were, however, certain official receptions, which were by no means exclusive, but were especially intended to admit persons of classes and

orders which had no pretence to aristocratic rank or to high social position of any kind, always provided that the applicants for admission had not made themselves personally objectionable by any manner of political or other offence. To these receptions, of course, hardly any of the "quality," as the phrase went, ever sought admission. The regulation was that any visitors whom the officials in the entrance hall of the Castle might feel free to admit were allowed to go up the staircase to the great reception room, at the door of which some officer in the service of the Viceroy received the name of each arrival and announced it, in resounding tones, to the Lord-Lieutenant and the company assembled.

An amusing story was current at the time concerning one of these receptions, which I venture to repeat here. An English military officer of high position was engaged one day in making these announcements. A visitor came in who approached the officer in a hesitating and diffident sort of way, and seemed to be rather surprised when that functionary apparently did not recognise him, and then asked his name. "Sir," he murmured meekly, "I thought you knew me, I made your riding breeches." The officer, regretting that he should have been led into any mistake, and believing he had caught the words correctly, motioned for the visitor to enter, and announced in clarion tones,

“ Major Rideing Bridges ” ! The performance created all the more amusement because there were many present at the moment in the great room who recognised the new-comer, and knew quite well the nature of his occupation, so useful to the cavalry service.

THE ABSENTEE

CHAPTER VIII

THE ABSENTEE

THE absentee was, during my early days, a most conspicuous figure in the life of Ireland, for he was, according to the once familiar phrase, conspicuous by his absence. He was, in fact, a living paradox. His influence was omnipresent, because he himself was always absent. I suppose a great change has taken place in this condition of Irish life since my time, owing to the beneficent laws which have been passed by Parliament during recent years, but at that earlier period, absenteeism was one of Ireland's most grievous and most peculiar afflictions.

Almost everywhere the traveller happened to turn throughout the southern and western, eastern and midland counties of Ireland, the observant wanderer came upon some great domain, securely walled in, and possessing a stately baronial castle which attracted his attention. When he asked who the lord of that great estate might be, he was sure to be told that it belonged to some peer or baronet or squire of high degree, who did not seem to possess what might be regarded as an

Irish name. Then, perhaps, he began to exercise his curiosity still further, and he put various questions—let us suppose this conversation to be taking place at some neighbouring hostelry—concerning the appearance and the characteristic qualities of this distinguished lord of the manor. In all probability he was assured by those present that none of them had ever seen the lord of the manor, or had known of his visiting his own domain, which was entirely managed for him by a resident agent.

Within my own experience I had known of several great estates which were thus conducted, some in the near neighbourhood of the city where I was born and brought up, and in which I had no more expectation of seeing the owner than I had of seeing the Shah of Persia. The fact did not cause any surprise in my younger days, I had not even begun to give it any particular thought, and no doubt assumed it to be one of nature's ordinary conditions. Some of the grounds belonging to the residential parts of many estates were left open considerably to any visitors from the outer world who chose to enter there and wander through the park and the gardens, and gaze upon the castle or hall; and I can well remember that there were estates on which some parts of the castle or hall itself were left free to the entrance and admiration of the casual visitor. Thus far, to the eyes of the



Photo

[Elliot & Fry.]

SIR JOHN POPE HENNESSY.

unconcerned observer, everything seemed picturesque, prosperous, and delightful.

But soon, even to my boyish mind, the grim and dismal truth began to be borne in, that the state of things created by the absentee system was one of almost unqualified antagonism to the progress of national peace and prosperity and of social order. The business affairs of each absent landlord—I mean now each habitually absent landlord, each “absentee” according to the familiar phrase—were managed for him by an agent, who was usually, or, indeed, almost always, a practical man of business in the narrowest sense of the word, who had no sympathy whatever with the ways and the feelings of the peasantry, no thought for their real interest, and no respect for the public opinion of the population in general.

A great Englishman, a master of the study of political economy, John Stuart Mill, declared in a memorable essay of his that the Irish cottier tenant was one of the few men then known to the world who could neither benefit by his industry nor suffer by his improvidence. The reason for this, as Mill most clearly and most fully explained, was that if the tenant set to work in the cultivation of his little patch of ground, and made it, as could easily be done, productive of a better harvest, the landlord or the landlord’s agent immediately raised his rent, and if the occupier could not find means to meet the demand he was,

almost as a matter of course, turned out of the farm or patch of ground, and some other tenant was afforded the opportunity of making a new venture on the spot which his predecessor had partly reclaimed. The same story would, in the ordinary course of things, be told over again with the new occupier; and so it went on, the general result being that the tenants found that they could not make a living out of the land, and must become emigrants, if they could beg or borrow the price of a steerage passage, or else must become the occupants of the workhouse.

Now it could easily be seen that however bad the state of things might be under a resident landlord, even though he were thoughtless and inattentive to the condition of his tenants, it was almost sure to be much worse where the estate was the property of an absentee, and was left to the management of a hired agent. Many of the resident landlords, even at the worst times, were men of high character, well capable of understanding the actual condition of the ordinary tenant, and anxious to help him toward the obtaining of fair recompense for hard work. But the absentee commonly had little or no inclination to trouble himself in any wise about the condition of those who occupied a piece of land in which he, the absentee owner, felt hardly more personal interest than if it were situated in Nova Zembla.

I can recall to mind some recollections con-

nected with the estate of an absentee in the south of Ireland and with the personal history of a former friend of mine which had something of a romantic interest in them, and may yet be not inappropriately brought in to make a part of this chapter. The estate of which I am now speaking was not very great in extent, but was delightfully situated in a most picturesque part of the County of Cork, and was not far from a range of hills on one side and the sea on the other. The estate, which was beautiful in itself, was planted with many trees, and had upon it picturesque remains of an old castle, as well as a fine modern dwelling. The actual landlord of this demesne had never been seen there within living memory so far as I could ever make out from any of those who came within the reach of my inquiries. Some relatives of mine lived not far from the castle, and thus I was often attracted to the neighbourhood.

The demesne itself, however, soon came to have especial attractions for me, and I made it a frequent holiday ground. I found a companion in these visitations, and the companion was a school friend of mine, and after my schooldays had been associated with me in various literary and artistic societies, institutions to which Cork in my younger days was very much devoted, and, I believe, continues to be devoted still. This young friend and I—he was two or three

years younger than I—began to grow more and more fascinated by the beauty of this retreat, which we had now to a certain extent made our own, as, indeed, there were not many strangers visiting the region to dispute our claim with us. There was not much occupation for horses or hounds or guns in the immediate vicinity, and so we were allowed to have the demesne very much to ourselves. But my companion soon began to pour out to me the great ambition of his heart. He had become taken by a desire, a romantic passion, an ambition, to make the place his own in a more literal and satisfying sense. He had fallen in love with the demesne, and like a true lover had set his heart on making it in every sense his own.

Years passed on, however, and this desire did not seem to make any approach towards fulfilment. My companion and I had to separate and go different ways in life, and he went into the political arena and succeeded as a candidate for the representation of an Irish parliamentary borough in the Conservative interest. In the House of Commons his marked capacity for parliamentary work, and his intellectual superiority to the ordinary class of Conservative county members, soon attracted the attention of Mr. Disraeli, then leader of the Conservative Party, and at a later day, when Mr. Disraeli was again in power, he appointed my friend to

the office of Governor of one of England's colonial settlements.

My friend continued in this sphere of life for a great many years, and rose steadily higher and higher in the rank and influence of his appointments, even while Liberal Governments were in power. As he was almost always abroad I lost sight of him for a great part of my life. We kept up our friendship, however, by occasional correspondence, and at last, after having held some important colonial governorships, and held them with success and marked distinction, he returned to Great Britain, but not to private life. He became again a member of the House of Commons. And then came suddenly an event in his life, the realisation of his boyhood's dreams and fervent wishes, for an unexpected chance gave him the opportunity of becoming the owner of that very estate in which he and I had rambled so often together, and in which he had made known to me his darling fancy and design for the possession of that enchanting spot. The absentee landlord had at last become tired of what seemed to him a very useless and out-of-the-way possession, and had directed his agent to offer the property for sale, and the opportune offer was instantly seized upon by my friend, who came at once with his wife to settle on the old estate.

This, indeed, was one of the incidents which,

if made part of a novelist's romance, would be set down by most critics, not to say most readers, as something too improbable even for well-ordered fiction, as, indeed, many events happening in our real life would also be thus regarded if introduced into his pages by the author of a romance. The whole event, I freely admit, does not throw any particularly new light upon the subject of absenteeism in Ireland. But it came up to my mind while I was preparing this chapter, and I could not resist the temptation to introduce this story drawn from real life, and carrying with it a genuine flavour of romance, into a chapter which has to do almost exclusively with the melancholy recollections of grim and distressing realities, without even a tinge of romance about them. The hero of this romance was my late friend Sir John Pope Hennessy.

This romantic chapter of modern history could not, however, be very well regarded as in any sense illustrative of the opportunities given to Ireland's sons by the existence of the absentee. The whole landlord system, at the time with which I am now dealing, and for ages before and many years after, worked itself out so as to be almost in every instance destructive to the prosperity, even taking that word in the most narrow and restricted sense, of the Irish peasant tenantry.

The entire land system of Ireland was then

in itself and at its best an enemy to the Irish cottier tenant. But then there were here and there throughout the island some landlords who always, or at least habitually, lived on their estates, who were sincerely anxious to do the best they could for their tenants, and who did, as far as they could, make their presence a help and a comfort to those who depended on them. The benevolent and intelligent landlord looked after even the very poorest of his tenants, and was ready to lend a listening ear to any complaints or any appeals they had to make; and even although he never set his mind to work at any general scheme for the improvement of the land system, he was willing, and his wife and family were willing, to do something with the object of making the peasant's hut better than a mere cave of hunger and exhaustion.

The resident landlord, therefore, if he had any heart or feeling or observation for the daily toils and lives of people below his own class, could not help having his attention called now and then to the actual condition of those who lived on his own lands, not far from the gates of his own estate, and whose cabins he could see even as he rode to hounds or drove out in his carriage. But nothing thus compelled the attention of the absentee landlord, who passed his life habitually in England or in Continental enjoyment, in the world of London or Paris fashion, or in the great

gambling resorts of the Continent. He had no memories of youth, recalling him to any interest in that region of Irish soil from which he drew a considerable portion of his income, the actual amount of which depended on the capacity of exaction or extortion possessed by his resident agent.

Now, I do not mean to say that the absentee landlord was always an absentee and nothing else, for I have certainly known instances of habitual absentees who were considerate enough to look in upon their tenants every now and then, and to show for the time a certain interest in their welfare. But I also have known of many absentees who, during the whole term of my actual residence in Ireland, had never been seen in the neighbourhood of their estates. The agent, therefore, was quite relieved from any dread of his landlord making a sudden descent upon the place and discovering that the tenants were in a state of abject poverty, and that the land was not even paying as well as it might have been made to pay by more judicious treatment and with a more liberal and humane consideration for the welfare of the unfortunate tenants.

To the agent, therefore, the tenant and his patch of land were alike mere mechanisms for the scraping up of a certain amount of coin, which was to be sent to the absentee landlord, and thus to secure the payment of his salary or

allowance, or whatever it might be termed, to the hired agent. The cabins of the peasant occupiers in most of these districts illustrated a condition not merely of poverty, but of squalor and utter wretchedness, the like of which could hardly have been seen in any country supposed to be governed by civilised laws and according to Christian principles. The family living in a cabin often had no beds to sleep in, and sometimes had no actual division of compartments in which different members of the family might lie down upon beds of straw. They often had no secure protection against rain and storm and snow, and in these miserable tenements each family might consider itself somewhat fortunate if it could procure potatoes enough to secure its members against actual starvation.

I have often wondered how under such conditions the mere elementary principles of decency could have been maintained in peasant families thus huddled together, but I certainly never heard any serious doubt raised as to the moral tone which maintained itself everywhere in Ireland's agricultural districts. The Priesthood of Ireland was unceasing in its care of the peasant class, ever regarding them and treating them as brothers and sisters, and not as mere serfs or social outcasts, and the peasant had always his church to go to for divine service, even when, owing to the poverty of the district,

the church itself was little better in its material construction than a magnified cottage. But the absentee landlord could not claim, even if he had felt in the slightest degree disposed to claim it, the credit of any share in this protecting influence over the peasant class, from whom his local agent never failed to exact their specified amount of rent.

The absentee, however, was always sure to be the cause of disorder and disturbance, amounting often to crime, in the neighbourhood which he persecuted by his absence. The evicted tenant threw himself upon the sympathy of those who had been or were likely to be his comrades in trouble, and they sometimes made nocturnal attacks upon the bailiffs or the police, and the police used their fire-arms and the peasants did the best or the worst they could with clubs and stones. Lives were taken on both sides, and the journals which professed to be supporters of Dublin Castle authority had long articles denouncing the unmanageable lawlessness and the incurable wickedness of the Irish peasant.

The state of things was bad enough when such disturbances occurred on the domain of a resident landlord, for then some appeal could be made to the landlord himself. The Priests, and any of the resident professional classes who saw that Irish tenants had some genuine grievance to complain of, might appeal to the landlord, and

prevail upon him to inquire carefully into the whole immediate question, and see whether the recent disturbance did not have its origin in some injustice done to the evicted tenant, and thus perhaps persuade the landlord to see that care should be taken to make the condition of the tenant more easy in the future.

But it would have been of little or no avail to make any such appeal to the feelings of the hired agent. He had no sympathy with the rural tenantry, their wants, their wishes, or their sufferings ; he had come to that part of the country from some business premises in a far-off city ; he was not, perhaps, an Irishman, and had no Irish connections, and he had always understood that his one duty was to carry out with literal obedience the instructions of the absent landlord, and to screw out the full amount of rent by every means which the established law of the land put within his reach.

The absentee landlord had probably other and much more valuable estates to look after. Perhaps he was a conspicuous figure in London's West End society, perhaps he had settled down in some delightful Continental resort ; perhaps he was giving himself up to incessant travel and exploring. At all events, it would have been in most cases very difficult indeed to bring him to withdraw for a time from the pursuits and occupations which he loved, in order that he

might devote himself to a careful study of the Irish land question, involving probably a residence for much time in an Irish county of which he knew very little, and for which he cared, if possible, even less. So he went his habitual ways for the most part, and his agent in Ireland kept putting on the screw as persistently as ever, and the Irish peasant began to find the conviction brought more and more home to his mind and to his heart that English law in Ireland was not made for him, and would do nothing to protect him and his wife and his children, and that the only hope which seemed to send the faintest gleam of light upon his path must come from secret societies and nocturnal combinations against the landlords, the magistrates, the police, and the law.

The result of all this was that the sincere, true-hearted, and educated friends of the Irish peasantry and of the Irish national cause found the conviction forced upon them that the laws, and the system which sustained and encouraged the Irish absentee landlord, were themselves the worst enemies of the poor and the landless.

Thus began the formation of secret societies ; and as, of course, a political organisation intended to be kept secret is always sure to be betrayed to the legalised authorities, the secret societies were soon forced into some open form of rebellion. Whole histories have been written of the rise

and progress of these associations, some of which kept up their mysterious names and mottoes and passwords for a considerable time, the police of each district having evidence enough to satisfy them that something secret was being done, but not enough to satisfy even the tribunals of those days that a rebellious movement was in course of development. Then, perhaps, some sudden accident led to a local explosion, and after the explosion came the usual restoratives of law and order, the trials, the convictions, the transport ship, and the gallows.

The leaders of these secret movements were for the most part men of character and honour, of unselfish purpose, and of patriotic devotion to what they firmly believed to be a good and a great cause.

I am not engaged now in tracing the history of Ireland's more modern struggles to win her political and constitutional freedom by rebellion. My immediate purpose in this chapter is to illustrate the fact that the real rebels against law and order, against peace and prosperity, were found in the systems, and in the men set up and sustained professedly with the object of maintaining peace and order and all other good and respectable things.

Now, among the influences of this class, that of the absentee landlord held a very potent and prominent place. We shall find that down to

quite a comparatively recent period of Ireland's history the literature of Ireland, its biographies, its stories, its ballads, its pamphlets, and its newspapers are alive with illustrations of the evils wrought by absenteeism on the social and political condition of the country. In numbers of stories, very popular at the time, and some written by gifted and distinguished authors, the agent plays the part of a destructive influence alike on those whom he is appointed to control, and on those whose interests he is paid and commissioned to maintain. Numberless compositions in verse, some professing to be comic in form, others sounding a deeper note, make him their theme. The newspapers on both sides of the question, alike those which maintain the cause of the landlord, absentee or resident, against every opposing influence or claim, and those which stand up for the oppressed tenant and for the inherent rights of the people and of humanity, all unite in enforcing on public attention the nature of the influence which the absentee landlord was then fated to exercise over the country, which no doubt he believed belonged especially, if not altogether, to him and to his class. I have therefore thought it not unreasonable to make him the hero, although the unseen hero, of this chapter.

**FAVOURITE TOPICS OF MY
EARLY DAYS**

CHAPTER IX

FAVOURITE TOPICS OF MY EARLY DAYS

I WONDER whether any of my readers, not born or brought up in Ireland, ever heard or read anything about the thrilling romance involving the lives of Sir Henry Hayes, one of Cork's aristocratic landlords, and Miss Mary Pike. I need not ask whether any of my readers ever heard of that romance during the time while it was still a reality, for even the oldest of us could not possibly pretend to answer that question in the affirmative. There was once a Countess of Desmond, whose fame is bequeathed to time by the statement as recorded in lines of verse still quoted which assure her posterity that—

“She lived to the age of one hundred and ten,
And died by a fall from a cherry tree then.”

Now if there were a lady living in our days of the same age as the Countess of Desmond, just before she ventured on her fatal experiment in climbing, she would still be too young to remember, even as an infant, the opening of the romance concerning Sir Henry Hayes and the Quaker lady. Yet during the whole of my lifetime in Ireland

the story was still a subject of common conversation, and, indeed, of not uncommon dispute. We were most of us partisans on the one side or the other ; we denounced Sir Henry Hayes and extolled the fair Quakeress, or we proclaimed ourselves in sympathy with the too ardent admirer, and maintained that the Quakeress had made a sad mistake in rejecting his addresses. For the story, be it understood, was not like that of the young Lochinvar and the loving girl whom he carried off from under the eyes of her parents, and of the suitor whom these parents were forcing her to accept as a husband. Sir Henry Hayes carried off the girl by sheer force because she rejected all his advances, and yet he contrived somehow to maintain his position among hosts of admirers, as a very champion of gallantry, whom no girl worth her violet powder could think of refusing. Then, again, there were controversies always going on as to the personal charms of the young lady and as to the real motives which Sir Henry had in his venturesome exploit.

Now, in the many famous tales told in history or romance concerning the carrying-off of a young woman by some intrepid cavalier, it hardly ever happens, so far as my recollection and reading serve me, that there arises any question whatever as to the beauty of the Helen or other fair being who is thus made a captive,

willing or unwilling, by the Paris of the tale. But I can well remember that when we talked over the story of Sir Henry Hayes, there were sure to be commentators who insisted that the young Quaker woman was very plain and unattractive in face, figure, and movements, and did not know how to dress herself becomingly, even according to the Quaker fashion of costume. Then came the question—if the lady were so unlovely, how did it come about that a man of position and property was ready to risk the severest punishment which the law, very severe in those days, could have put upon him. As promptly came the answer—Sir Henry Hayes, like many other great personages of the landlord class in his time, perhaps in later times also, had, through his personal extravagance, become embarrassed by heavy debts, and he knew that Miss Pike was entitled to a large fortune, which he would gain possession of when the abduction should have ended in a legalised marriage.

Now, on these and various other questions, the disputants were each, according to my distinct recollection, perfectly convinced that he, or she, had the most conclusive evidence on his or her side of the controversy. Some of us contended that Sir Henry had good reason for supposing that he could easily prevail on the young Quaker lady to accept him as a husband, and that when once the marriage vows had been

pledged between them she could not but fall in love with him, and would be only too happy to make him absolute master of her money, which in any case would be his, as well as of herself.

I remember, too, that during those disputes some of us young men occasionally pointed to the fact that Sir Henry had numbered ever so many years beyond those which are attributed to the young Lochinvar, and had already been married more than once before he proclaimed himself a determined suitor for the hand of Miss Pike, and that therefore he was not exactly at that romantic period of life when the lover may still be as blind as Cupid himself to the personal defects of his idol. Sir Henry's time of life was certainly that at which it is understood that the solid and lasting allurements of the ladies' money-bags have a greater fascination than the fading charms of face and figure, even where such charms of face and figure do happen to exist.

However that may be, the certain facts are that Sir Henry did carry off the young Quaker woman by sheer force, and that he obtained the opportunity of thus carrying her off by a very fraudulent and shabby trick. Miss Pike was staying at the house of some friends of hers—a charming little demesne by the river-side, where the river stretches on towards the sea, and there she received a letter, purporting to come from the physician in attendance on her mother, who lived

at some distance from Cork, urging her to come at once and see her parent, who was in imminent danger of death. This letter turned out to be a mere forgery, got up by Sir Henry Hayes to forward his plans. Miss Pike and her hostess started at once in a carriage to make the journey ; and when at some distance from their home the carriage was stopped by Sir Henry Hayes and a band of his retainers, the traces were cut, and Miss Pike was carried off by Sir Henry, thrust into another carriage, and thus conveyed as a prisoner to Sir Henry's picturesque home on the inland side of the city. Here she was forced to go through a sham ceremonial of marriage performed by a sham clergyman, and Sir Henry forced a gold wedding ring upon her finger, which she indignantly tore away and flung upon the floor.

I need not go into fuller details concerning this astounding caricature of the romantic *Lochinvar* story. Enough to say that Sir Henry, after a while, was ordered by the higher authorities to be arrested and put on his trial. The leading counsel for the prosecution was the famous advocate and orator, John Philpot Curran, and Curran had on this occasion but an easy task for his legal skill and his eloquence. Curran is accredited with having made an amusing joke, or rather it should be called an amusing sort of pun, during the progress of the trial. As he was passing into the court, through a watchful crowd,

an old woman who was in sympathy with his side of the case poured out to him a prayer that he might gain the day. "Yes, but then," exclaimed Curran, with a glance of his expressive eyes towards her, "if I gain the day you must lose the knight." And the jest was well in keeping with the burlesque character of the whole proceedings.

There was no serious defence—there could not possibly be any defence to such a prosecution—and Sir Henry Hayes was at once found guilty by the jury. According to the penal code of the day the prisoner was liable to capital punishment for the offence he had committed. The jury, however, seemed to shrink from becoming the instruments of so stern a punishment, and they recommended Sir Henry Hayes to mercy. The judge, however, had no legal authority to mitigate the sentence, and he therefore pronounced the decree that Sir Henry Hayes was to be put to death by public execution at the place then known as Gallows Green, in Cork City. The sentence, however, was afterwards mitigated, by the Crown authorities, to one of penal servitude for life in the Botany Bay region, then one of the colonies allotted to the reception of offenders who were not considered quite bad enough to be sent to the gibbet. This was in 1801, and the sentence was promptly carried out, but it did not prove to be an exile

for life after all, and Sir Henry was yet to receive the benefit of another wave of Crown clemency's wand.

There is, of course, a romantic legend associated in Irish memories with the second display of Viceregal clemency. The story goes that in 1812 the then Viceroy of Ireland, the Duke of Rutland, met at a ball given by some great landlord in the south of Ireland a grown-up daughter of Sir Henry Hayes, that he asked and obtained her hand in more than one dance, and was so charmed by the partnership that the young lady became conscious of the impression she was making, and promptly resolved to take advantage of it. According to this story, therefore, the daughter appealed to the mercy of the fascinated Lord-Lieutenant and implored him "to break her father's chains." Whether such an appeal ever was made or not it is certain that very soon after Sir Henry Hayes actually received an entire remission of his sentence, and was allowed to return home. An article in the "Irish Packet" of February 6th, 1904, signed John O'Mahoney, tells us that: "The last picture I know of Sir Henry is seen through the memory of an old Cork lady. As a girl, she often saw him sitting on fine days outside his quarters in Thomas Street. He was then a feeble old man, and blind. He wore a rush hat, and a blue coat, with white facings—a remnant of dandy days. He would

hail the passers-by, and ask them to lift his chair into the sun, and lead him to sit there, ‘ It is so much colder nowadays to what it was when I was Sheriff.’ ”

This closing sentence seems to me peculiarly touching, and especially characteristic of the Sir Henry Hayes as I construct him from the story of his career. There in his utterly broken-down old age, a totally blind old man, hardly capable of movement, it was still some relief to him to recall to memory the days when he was actually High Sheriff of his native city. The anecdote recalls to my mind a humorous French story I read not very long ago, in which a little company of friends are beset by some difficulties and troubles on an excursion meant for pleasure. One of them breaks out into a little burst of execration. Another of the party admonishes him that “ *ça n'avance rien*,” to which another of the company calmly responds, “ *Non, mais ça soulage !* ” Sir Henry Hayes was probably in some such mood when he uttered the sentence ascribed to him in the anecdote I have quoted. It did not help him in his blindness, his old age, and his broken-down condition, to remember that he had once been High Sheriff of Cork, but he could still find some solace in retaining the proud consciousness of his former dignity; and we cannot, any of us, grudge him that amount of comfort.

We may thus appropriately let the curtain fall upon a life-drama with the most unheroic of heroes, who nevertheless kept keen interest and sharp controversy alive for generations after he had passed away, and whose story must always be associated in my mind with some of the most picturesque scenery it has ever been my good fortune to look upon.

I do not propose to offer to my readers many reminiscences which have to do with what might be called the scandalous chronicles of Ireland in my early days. I do not think indeed that the story of Sir Henry Hayes, coming down to us through its century of time, could be merely set down as a scandalous chronicle. Those among the Irish public who could bring themselves to admire the hero of the tale did so because they regarded him as a sort of masterful chieftain out-of-date, who when he became attracted by a woman believed it was his hereditary right to exercise the law of conquest over her and to make her his wife whether she liked it or not. These admirers were attracted by what they regarded as the old romance of the story, and not in any sense by its affinity to the order of social scandal in which a large proportion of human beings are accustomed to find gratification.

The people of Ireland, as far as I have ever been able to observe them, took but little interest in the repetition and the discussion of social

scandals. I do not, however, venture to assert that my countrymen and women of all classes, or of any class, were ever entirely exalted in feeling and sentiment and taste above the atmosphere in which such scandals and such gossip can find for a time a welcome and a shelter. Indeed, some recollections, drawn from the history of my own native city, might of themselves come in appropriately to warn me against any such overstraining of national panegyric.

For instance, I have read lately, with much interest, an article by Mr. J. W. Flynn, contributed to an Irish newspaper entitled the old Cork "Freeholder." In this article Mr. Flynn tells us that the "Freeholder" was a scandalous publication which "maintained itself by coarse libels . . . it blistered, it pilloried, it vilified, libelled, exasperated, and generally played cerulean Hades with the citizens of Cork." Of this publication, however, I have myself no personal memory, for it ceased to exist, as also did its editor, in or about 1832. Mr. Flynn tells us, however, that it was afterwards revived by another venturesome journalist, and that it continued to exist until somewhere about 1842.

Now it is of this later issue of the "Freeholder" that I have some boyish, but tolerably distinct recollections. It was a little weekly paper, published in what might be described metaphorically as a subterranean fashion. It

did not advertise itself or announce its place or periods of publication, but its existence was made very clearly known to a large number of Cork citizens, who passed the news on to their friends, and thus accomplished the work of subterranean advertising. It was altogether a satirical, libellous, and even scandalous periodical, but it did not contain any articles actually indecent, or unfitted for family reading, except in the sense that libellous attacks on private individuals and libellous descriptions of respectable citizens and their social habits might be fairly considered not quite suitable for family study.

The proprietor and editor of this “Freeholder” was an elderly gentleman, who passed the greater part of his life lying in bed as an invalid, whether a self-created invalid or not I do not know, and who gave himself up to the production of his weekly periodical. Many of my grown-up relatives and friends knew the editor, and knew all about the publication, and I am afraid that some of them were occasional contributors of spicy paragraphs to its columns. It was sometimes very amusing in its way because of the comical, often even extravagantly comical, descriptions which it gave of this or that personage. It contained many amusing contributions in verse, some of them parodies on famous poems, converted or perverted to the purposes of local and

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personal satire and caricature. Moore and Walter Scott, Byron and even Shakespeare, came to be frequently made thus to serve the purposes of the Cork satirists, and some of these parodies were really very clever and even brilliant.

But I cannot remember that there was anything coarse or indecent in any of the pages of this more modern Cork "Freeholder" or offensive in any other sense than the offence deliberately offered to those who were the objects of the satire. I know that the "Freeholder" was always left lying about in our home, where there were then three young people, my sister, my brother and myself, and where I am sure the paper would never have been allowed to meet our eyes if it had been known to contain any indecent or corrupting paragraphs. I read some of its pages long after it had ceased to be published, and I saw no suggestion of obscenity or immorality in its sarcastic ebullitions. It was really only a bright and clever little comic journal, a sort of gossiping provincial, or rather parochial, "Punch" of its time, with obscure fellow-parishioners satirised and caricatured, in place of national celebrities. It bore a certain resemblance to a comic periodical which first made its appearance in Liverpool, more than half a century ago, and which has lasted now for many years. It was, and is, known by the appropriate title of "The Porcupine." The Liverpool satirical

journal was not, however, published under any conditions of secrecy, but was a weekly paper brought out under all the usual conditions of lawful publication, and sold openly at railway stations and in bookshops and by newsboys in the streets. Its editor was a very valued old friend of mine, Mr. Hugh Shimmin, who has long since passed out of life. “The Porcupine” had for its contributors a number of clever and some really brilliant writers, of whom not a few have since made for themselves a name in literature. Many of my readers I am sure will know of “The Porcupine.”

I must return, however, for a short time, to that more recent issue of the Cork “Freeholder,” which was sent into private circulation during my boyish days. During its period of existence it suddenly came into literary fashion to publish satirical poems, of which the Prince of Darkness was made the principal figure. My readers in general are now well aware that a similar phantasy or form of humour has come into dramatic fashion at a much later period, and indeed, in the early years of a later century. The London public have been favoured very lately with some attempts to exhibit on the stage a living picture of humanity’s earliest enemy.

In the days of the Cork “Freeholder,” at least of its later version, the Devil had thus been brought into literature, and I have a

distinct recollection of a poem in the pages of that periodical which described him as a visitor to the City of Cork, and told in humorous language of the pranks he played there, the friends whom he singled out for his favours, the congenial associations which he discovered, and the enemies whom he vainly tried to frighten into submission. I remember being much amused by the account given in verse of the manner in which the arch-fiend was attracted towards the capital of Munster. He had been wandering about the earth for some time, and had found a good deal of occupation in great English cities, when it suddenly occurred to him that there was at least one Irish city which would be well worth a visit. Then he at once made up his mind, and he thus announced his determination :

“‘ May I never get back to hell,’ he said,
‘ If I don’t take a trip to Cork ! ’ ”

This way of looking at the matter, greatly amused myself and most of my young companions. The idea of thus regarding the infernal realms as a place perpetual banishment from which would be an intolerable privation, diverted and delighted our immature minds, and we were accordingly inspired to read through the whole satire. We found it, I must confess, rather difficult reading, because it introduced a great many personages then holding public positions in the

City of Cork, about whose doings we boys knew very little or nothing whatever, and we therefore naturally failed to see where or how the humour came in. But I can still quite recall the impression of amusement and amazement with which we read the demon's evidently sincere declaration that if he failed to visit our city he might well deserve to be visited with a decree of perpetual expulsion from the burning halls of Eblis.

The story of Sir Henry Hayes was one which occupied the attention and inspired the debate of old, young and middle-aged Cork alike for some generations of controversy. But I feel entitled to say that, so far as my own memory serves me, it was a topic of much greater interest to the elders than the youngers of our city. We, the youngers, who were still in our student days, were much more inclined to indulge in controversy concerning great historic events or great figures in poetry or romance. We used to have, and loved to have, fierce discussions as to the relative greatness of Homer's Achilles and Homer's Hector, and I can remember that there were some of us who carried their devotion to the Greek hero so far as to maintain that he was justified in dragging his defeated Trojan enemy round the walls of Troy, a course of conduct which others of us insisted ought to have excluded the impetuous Greek from anything like decent

companionship for the remainder of his life-time.

Then, again, we were very seriously divided as to the relative greatness of the Greek Alexander and the Roman Julius Cæsar. Many of us, of whom I was one, resolutely maintained that no controversy ought to have been possible on such a question, inasmuch as Alexander, whatever his military capacity, was only a soldier and nothing else, whereas Julius Cæsar was one of the greatest military commanders the world had ever seen, and was also a great statesman, a great writer, and a great orator, of whom Cicero, who may fairly be regarded as an authority on such a subject, once asked, “ Which of our living orators can be considered equal in eloquence to Julius Cæsar, even among those of us who are orators and nothing more ? ”

We had, of course, many eager and animated discussions about the rival merits of the Greek and Roman poets and dramatists, when compared with the poets and dramatists of modern times, and we young fellows were generally divided into two distinct schools on this subject, the one putting the ancients above all imaginative workers, while the other school insisted that those majestic personages were really only sent into the world with the object of enabling the heads of classical schools to harass unlucky modern boys with the need-

less and tiresome study of a Greek and Latin which was no longer spoken in Athens or in Rome. It was somewhat interesting to observe—but I think I can observe it better by my present help of recollections than I did at the time when the debates were going on around me—to observe that the boys divided themselves during such discussions into the old-fashioned and the new-fashioned school, just as the grown-up readers of poems and dramas are now and have ever been in the habit of dividing themselves.

Naturally, however, the most animated and the warmest controversies among the Munster students of those days were inspired by some question coming within the range of modern history. Somehow or other we young students seemed to have been more deeply and personally concerned about some chapter of modern history which was still far away from our own generation than about the political contests of our own time. We seldom grew into vehement or even animated discussion, seldom ascribed ignorance or prejudice or ignoble self-seeking to any of our number, because of his expressed views with regard to the subject of Repeal of the Union or the relative merits of O'Connell and Sir Robert Peel as political leaders. But if we went a few generations back in history we sometimes found occasion for passionate utterance and personal reproach.

One of our frequent topics of debate and disagreement concerned the claim of the Stuart family on the loyalty and the devotion of the Irish people. With many, or most of the young Irishmen still in their schooldays just then, loyalty and devotion to the Stuarts seemed to be something like part of their religious faith. Indeed, with many of them it was practically associated with their religious faith, for the one reason that the later Stuarts mostly belonged to the Church of Rome, and always, of course, professed to be devoted adherents to the faith of that Church, however freely they may have wandered from the teaching of that faith in the everyday course of their lives. But there were not a few of us, on the other hand, who entirely declined to accept the Stuart sovereigns as in any way deserving the national homage and the national support of the Irish people. We could never see what claims Charles I and Charles II had on the gratitude and the homage of Ireland, and the fact that these men were descendants from a line of princes who professed the same creed to which Ireland was devoted only seemed to make their sins against the Irish national cause, against Ireland's national freedom, more and more to be deplored and condemned.

Then, again, there were many of us who were only too well inclined to "run away with the story" against James II. He was frequently described

in the Irish language by a vituperative and very repulsive phrase of contempt, which will hardly bear translation into the pages of a work intended for general reading. He was set down as a coward and as the betrayer of a righteous cause, and much as our Irish lads all detested the name and the career of William III, even that detestation did not tend to modify their hatred and contempt for his unsuccessful rival.

There was a kind of theory, then very prevalent among the Irish youth of my early days, that James II had lost all his chances by his irresistible inclination to turn his back upon his opponents and run away from the field of fight just when victory seemed to be actually within his reach. Now, however, all impartial and competent authorities agree that there was no foundation whatever for the reports which ascribe to James II the temperament of a coward. Indeed, the historical instances are very rare in which men brought up to the work and the duties and in the glare of sovereignty have ever allowed themselves to give way to the influence of mere physical dread. I could not join with either that set of my young companions who reverenced the Stuarts merely because they were Stuarts, or that other set who denounced James II as traitor and coward merely because he did not succeed in driving Dutch William from the field of battle.

I mention these differences of opinion here with

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the purpose, chiefly, of making it clear to my readers that with all our devotion to the national cause, and our antipathy to English rule, we did not all, or most of us, or indeed many of us, condemn and denounce an English sovereign merely because he or she happened to be an English sovereign, and was, therefore, according to the conviction of all of us, occupying the position of an enemy to the national claims of our island.

**“POOR CHARLIE GRAY”
AND OTHERS**

CHAPTER X

“POOR CHARLIE GRAY” AND OTHERS

DURING my sister's lifetime I first made the acquaintance of one who became a dear friend of mine, young Charles Gray, whom I afterwards described as “Poor Charlie Gray.” He was a youth of good family, and had had his education at Trinity College, Dublin. His family and he were members of the then Established Church in Dublin, and were all devoted to the principles of British administration. But as I have said before in these pages, we, the young men of Ireland who had any literary or artistic tastes, did not limit our friendships to those who belonged to our own political order, and our literary associations included members of all religious professions and all political parties.

Therefore, although I was then devoted to the Young Ireland movement, I kept up an intimate friendship for several years with Charlie Gray. During the course of that intimacy I came to know that he had fallen deeply in love with the daughter of an influential county family, who claimed to be of English ancestry. The young girl was in love with him, but her father and

mother were determined that no marriage should take place. They took their daughter with them to England, and in the meantime, as I afterwards learned, they kept, as they had done for some time before, a close watch over Charlie Gray's doings in his earlier bachelor days. For Charlie had led the sort of life rather common among young men of means in those days, and I suppose rather common, too, among young men even in much later days. He had been an eager frequenter of race-courses, of clubs where gambling was a familiar pastime; he had spent most of his nights in theatres, had made the acquaintance of pretty actresses and even of ballet girls, and although I do not believe that he could in any reasonable sense have been described as given to anything like actual dissipation, yet he certainly had not been leading the kind of life which parents of a somewhat puritanical turn of mind would be likely to regard as suitable in a husband of one of their daughters.

My personal acquaintance with Gray was soon interrupted for a long time, as I then ceased to be a resident in Ireland, and began my career as a newspaper writer in Liverpool, and settled down some years afterwards in London. I have now once again to break away from my early days, and to offer to my readers some recollections concerning Charlie Gray which belonged to a maturer period of my life. I learned that he had been

completely disappointed in his love affair, and that the girl of his heart, who had given her heart to him, had at last been compelled by her father and mother to marry a wealthy Englishman, and had taken up her residence with her husband in London. I had known the girl well during the days of my friendship with Gray, and I felt sure that she had been sincerely devoted to him, and that her marriage had been but an enforced sacrifice to the parental dictation. Gray, in his disappointment, had been greatly attracted by the rising fame of Garibaldi, and I heard that he had become one of Garibaldi's volunteer military followers in the civil wars then raging throughout the Italian States, where the Italians were struggling against Austrian and other foreign oppression. The last news I heard of my friend was that as one of Garibaldi's volunteers he had lost his life at the battle of the Volturno.

The moment has now come to explain to my readers that this somewhat lengthened departure from the regular track of my narrative has been made partly with the object of introducing to these pages some verses of mine which I devoted to the memory of my lost friend. The verses are not quite faithful to the story of my own career, for, as my readers already know, I never was a war correspondent for any newspaper, and my one and only performance as special corres-

ponent was on behalf of the London “Morning Star,” when I went out to Konigsberg to describe the coronation of that King William of Prussia who afterwards became the first German Emperor. Here, however, are the verses. I give them, as the familiar newspaper phrase goes—for what they are worth.

POOR CHARLIE GRAY.

“I was the first who saw him fall :
 We buried him just where we found him,
 His soldier shirt a crimson pall,
 His sword-belt buckled still around him.
 Live Garibaldi ! as he fell,
 He cried, and made a last endeavour
 To breathe another name as well,
 And then his lips were mute for ever.

“Poor Charlie Gray ! The heavy tears
 Fell from these lids, I must acknowledge ;
 I knew him well in earlier years,
 And we were steady friends at college.
 We parted—when I met him here
 He had grown yellow, thin, despondent,
 A Garibaldian volunteer,
 And I a Special Correspondent.

“Some girls at home will mourn him dead,
 Yes, and I think I know one other
 Will ever mourn that spirit fled,
 Though now she is married and a mother !
 He told me soon before his death
 He never could be brought to blame her ;
 Indeed, I know his latest breath
 Was spent in an attempt to name her.

“ His old cigar case home I’ll send,
 Long as I live it will remind me
Of early friendship, of the friend
 I leave in Italy behind me.
No coffin holds that heart so free,
 He leaves no epitaph or urn—no !
His noblest epitaph must be :
 ‘ He fought and fell beside Volturno ! ’ ”

There was undoubtedly a good deal of fiction mixed up with the actual facts of this story, but among these actual facts were the brave and noble character and the many gifts of poor Charlie Gray, his genuine devotion to the one love of his heart, the utter disappointment brought to his life when the girl’s parents decreed her separation from him, and then the heroism with which he devoted himself to the struggle of Italy for freedom from the rule of her foreign masters.

I heard afterwards, and without much surprise, that the father and mother of the young woman soon got into the way of talking among their friends about Charlie Gray in terms of admiration for his voluntary devotion to the cause of Garibaldi and of Italy. Those who belonged to that class in Ireland of whom the girl’s father was a very self-satisfied member, were almost always avowed advocates of Italian resistance to foreign domination, while they professed nothing but contempt and abhorrence for any effort on the part of Irishmen to obtain self-government for their native country.

The story of Charlie Gray reminds me of another incident, another love story, which, however, belongs altogether, as do the opening passages of Gray's story, to my early recollections. Among a circle of my immediate friends in the far-off days of 1848 were a pair of young, very young sweethearts, neither of whom had then gone much beyond the mature age of eighteen. The lover was a youth of some culture, and of much literary taste, who was then already beginning to show some promise of success in literature, a promise which I may say he afterwards fulfilled to a considerable extent in actual life. The girl was very charming in appearance and manner, had a decided taste for music, and a love for poetry and fiction and the drama. Her father was a very successful man of business in Cork City, and he had bought for his wife and their one child, this daughter, a very delightful and delightfully situated home and garden on the banks of the sea and not far from the city. The father and mother were strongly Conservative in their political views, and were eager for the social favour of their Conservative superiors in station, while my friend the lover was a devoted member of the Young Ireland party.

My friend had some relatives who had their very modest abode in that seashore region where the father of the young lady established his new dwelling. Thus my friend was

enabled to make many visits to the place, and as he and the girl were already very much in love with each other, they found ample opportunities of meeting there while the parents were, as they very often were, attending to business and making money and enjoying social amusement in the city. Thus they spent the greater part of their lives, leaving the daughter in her country abode to the care of an elderly housekeeper, whose watchfulness the lover and his lass contrived frequently to evade, and they were thus enabled to have delightful rambles together among the woods and by the waters. It was not long before the loving pair pledged themselves to everlasting love and to a future marriage, and went through a formal exchange of rings, each giving to the other a birthday ring bestowed by parental affection.

The girl, during one of her visits to her parents in Cork, was greatly attracted one day at the bookseller's shop by a beautifully printed miniature edition of Byron's "Don Juan," and at the same time by an equally beautiful and miniature copy of the New Testament. These two volumes she at once bought, and then sent on to her lover, having written his name and repledged her affection on the fly-leaf of each. But I shall tell my readers at once that this dear young woman had never read a line of "Don Juan," and had not the least idea that it was supposed

to be a poem unsuited for the study of pure-minded young ladies. She did not belong to a reading family, and she only knew that Byron was a great poet whom she supposed all educated persons ought to have read, and she did not see the slightest offence against religious principle or feeling in making the New Testament a companion present with one of Byron's poems. The lover, of course, was delighted with the gifts, and when the girl told him afterwards that she had never read "*Don Juan*" he did not advise her to read it, but, on the other hand, he was careful not to disturb her feelings by any dissertation on the general character of the poem.

About that time the young man happened to be a member of a secret political organisation which was occupying itself with preparations for another attempt at rebellion against English rule. He firmly believed that the New Testament he had received from his future wife, as he assumed she must be, could not be better used for any mortal purposes than for the swearing of recruits for his new efforts on behalf of the national cause. He did not tell the girl anything about his course of action in this matter, because he knew that her father and mother were vehement opponents of all Irish national movements, and he did not want to disturb her conscience by any fear that she was going too far in disobedience to parental rule.

Here was, indeed, a curious complication, brought about between lovers' vows and parental injunctions. The maiden, who was a daughter of the most strictly and austere religious father and mother, parents who had both a vague impression, founded on familiar hearsay, that Lord Byron was an absolutely wicked man, given up to the teaching of nothing but immorality—this maiden had given to her lover a copy of Lord Byron's most condemned poem, and at the same time a copy of the New Testament. Thus much at least was known to the maiden herself, but what was not known to her was that the New Testament presented as her gift was actually being used by her lover for the swearing-in of wicked rebels against the rule of Queen Victoria, against the throne and the altar of the British dominions ! As a matter of fact, the young lover used the *Don Juan* by mistake, but he did not know that at the time.

A decisive crisis, however, soon came about in the love-story. The parents returned to the sea-side home, and there told their daughter that they had heard all about her goings-on with the young lover, that they now knew him to be engaged in a lawless conspiracy against Queen Victoria and her laws, and that she must break off absolutely from any engagement she had formed with him, or else her father, who was a city magistrate, would at once put the law in

motion against the rebel, and would also remove her, by force if necessary, as she was still under age, to some foreign country where she could never see her lover's face again. The result of all this was that the young woman, who was not quite cast in the mould of your true heroine of romance, submitted to the paternal decree, and consented to break off her engagement, a fact which the father made known to the hapless lover, and a re-exchange of rings was effected through the same medium. Not long after, the parents, by further exercise of their authority, brought about a marriage between the girl and the son and heir of a wealthy family in the county. The former lovers were, in fact, parted for ever, and never met again.

After the failure of the plans for new outbreaks of open force against the maintenance of legislative union, the lover left Ireland and settled in the American states. He rose there to literary and political distinction, and made for himself a successful career, found a new love there, got married, and became father of a family, and was quite an elderly man when he heard from some Irish visitor that the lady of his first love had died quite an elderly woman, leaving a husband and children behind her. I believe that he had always kept in his possession the two uncompanionable little volumes which had been given him by his unforgotten first love.

There was nothing particularly extraordinary in the whole story, but it contains at least some peculiarities which made me think it worthy of a place among these chapters of Irish recollections. There was nothing whatever in it out of which a romance could possibly have been constructed of a quality to find favour among the subscribers to a circulating library of those days, or the purchasers of a sixpenny or shilling volume of romance in our own time. Nothing tragical happened to either of the lovers, and yet they were, so far as I was able to make out at the time, very true and devoted lovers. But they both accepted the decrees of superior family authority, and yet neither heart was broken, and they do not seem to me to have been prevented from enjoying all that life gave them to enjoy, just as those are supposed to do, if there are many such in our prosaic world, who marry their first and only loves, and are therefore entitled by romantic rule to live happy ever after.

It was my fortune to meet both the lovers several times during their after lives, and after both had got married, and I have sometimes casually got into conversation with each—not, of course, in the company of the other—and have never observed that the slightest cloud came over the brow of either as he or she made quiet inquiries about the health and the doings and the prospects of the other.

One of my early recollections of Ireland takes the form of a somewhat curious story of mistaken identity, which, however, led to no manner of dramatic result, and led to no intervention on the part of any of the constituted authorities. I venture to tell the story because it includes the name of a dear early friend of me and mine, and there is nothing whatever in it which casts any cloud on the memory of those about whom it is related. The heroine of the tale was a young Cork lady, well known to me and to my family and to most of my friends in the far-off days before I had made up my mind to try my fortunes in England.

This young lady was Miss Grace Fitzgerald who had been left an orphan by the death of both her parents when she was still only in her early womanhood, and left without any fortune to maintain her. She had been well educated, however, and well brought up in every sense, and she had many friends who were anxious to put her in the way of maintaining herself. It was therefore arranged that she should form a private school for the instruction of girls—girls growing into womanhood, and not merely children—in all that appertains to the culture of the intelligence, and even of the intellect, and not for the mere amount of that ordinary school teaching which is so often a formal and unproductive routine in the life of the middle

classes. Grace Fitzgerald began her course as a teacher in a set of furnished apartments, what we should now call a flat, on the Grand Parade, one of the principal streets in Cork City.

Grace Fitzgerald was getting on very well, showed a distinct capacity for the culture of her pupils in mind and manners, and seemed to be at the opening of a very successful and highly useful career. Then there suddenly broke in upon her life an influence new to her, but which is certainly not unfamiliar to the readers of romance. She had admirers, and one of them fell in love with her, and she, likewise, fell in love with him. He was not a rich young man, and most of her elder friends regarded the proposed marriage as an impossible project. I remember, however, hearing a conversation on the subject, in the course of which one of the ladies expressed an opinion which I venture to introduce here because it illustrates the very moderate ideas which some of our Cork friends then entertained as to the amount of annual pecuniary means required to make two lovers happy. The lady of whom I am speaking said that she saw no reason to believe that the proposed marriage might not quite be a felicitous arrangement because, she went on to say, "I am assured on good authority that the young man has a salary of eighty pounds a year."

However that might be, and whether such

amount of income would or would not have made ample provision for the lovers when wedded, the certain fact is that the marriage did not take place. The lovers were actually engaged, but the closer friends on both sides never approved of the engagement. There was, to begin with, the difference of religion to interpose an obstacle. The young man belonged to the Church of Rome, the young woman to the Church of England. Most of Miss Fitzgerald's friends and patronesses and scholars were of the English Church, and it seemed only too probable that she must lose many of her pupils if she were to marry a Catholic husband.

Then the lover himself began to be alarmed, but I must do him the justice to say that his alarm was entirely on account and on behalf of his sweetheart, and not in any sense on any selfish account of his own. This was a time of impassioned altercation throughout Ireland on political questions. The rebellion of 1848 had been a somewhat recent event, and among the middle-class Protestants of Cork City there was here and there a strong impression that every Catholic Irishman was an enemy of Queen Victoria, of the British Government, of the Established Church—the Protestant Church was then still established by law in Ireland—and of every institution set up by Ireland's British rulers.

The young lover, therefore, began to be

possessed by a strong feeling that if he were to prevail upon Miss Fitzgerald to become his wife, he must sever her at once from all her local relatives, friends, and patrons and patronesses. So he explained himself frankly and fully to the girl, and she saw with him that their hoped-for union was an impracticable scheme. Perhaps she found herself somewhat disappointed and chilled by the sudden announcement of the doubts which had come up in the mind of her lover, and after the romantic fashion of a loving girl came to the conclusion that the young man's affection could not have been a very deep-seated passion since such merely practical calculations could have brought him to such an unromantic resolve. She therefore controlled her feelings as well as she could and accepted the terms of separation. But she made up her mind at the same time to another resolve, this time all her own. She felt that she could not endure a continued life in Cork under its utterly changed and shattered conditions. She had an uncle living in England, of whom she was very fond, and who was very fond of her, and she determined to throw herself on his protection and to seek the shelter of his home. The uncle had been for some time a widower, and had no children, and he had more than once intimated to her a wish that she could share his home with him and take charge of its affairs. So she wrote

to him at once, telling him that she had grown weary of her life in Cork and would be glad to find a home with him in England. The result of all this was that before long she had made her final arrangements for the giving up of her work as a teacher, and for leaving the city of her birth and her youth.

Now the name of the young woman's uncle was Edward Fitzgerald, and he lived in the small town of Woodbridge in Suffolk. Her former lover had known of the existence of this uncle, and had known even of his wish that Grace might share his home, and the lover was therefore much relieved in mind when the knowledge that Grace had found so helpful and hopeful a shelter was brought to him by many of her Cork friends. Then the world went on in its usual course for some years, and the name of Grace Fitzgerald soon faded out of the recollection of most of those who had known her while she lived in Cork.

Her former lover pursued his literary career, and was naturally, therefore, a close observer of new developments in literature. Some years later the fame of the quatrains of Omar Khayyám, as rendered for the first time into English by an English translator, came upon the world like the flash of some sudden revelation. The name of the translator was not published in the first instance, but it soon came to be made known, and our young friend in Cork learned that the

name was Edward Fitzgerald, and that he lived in the town of Woodbridge in Suffolk. Then he naturally became satisfied at once that this great new figure in literature was that of his former sweetheart's uncle, under whose care she was then living. It must be so, he said to himself, and even the date of Edward Fitzgerald's birth, now published in all the newspapers, seemed to him to confirm his conviction. Also, he thought it was hardly possible that there could be two Edward Fitzgeralds living at the same time in the small town of Woodbridge.

Quite a number of years passed on with him, and he remained always under this conviction, and became one of the most enthusiastic admirers of Edward Fitzgerald, with a certain half-conscious pride in the thought that he had once been the adopted lover of Edward Fitzgerald's niece. He had been for several years a happy married man, with a loving wife and some children, when, by mere accident, he came upon a paragraph in a London newspaper, telling of some disturbance in the town of Woodbridge in Suffolk which had been suppressed by the timely and energetic and yet judicious and considerate intervention of the District Chief Constable, Edward Fitzgerald.

Here, indeed, was a sudden shock, and something like a bewilderment to our poor friend. Was it possible, then, that there could be in

the same small provincial town, living there for many, many years, two Edward Fitzgeralds, one the local head of the police and the other one of the great literary stars of the closing century, and that no newspaper writer had ever noticed the fact? The astonished man made known his astonishment to his wife, and she quietly set to work to ascertain the facts. She soon found out that the poet and the Chief Constable of Woodbridge, both bearing the same name, had been for many years fellow-residents in the town, and that the identity of names and dissimilarity of occupations had created no sort of sensation there. The truth appeared to be that those who took an enthusiastic interest in the work of the poet felt no interest whatever in the doings of the Head of Constabulary, and that those who were now and then concerned about the duties of the police officer felt no manner of concern about the inspirations of the poet.

So ends my story—a true story, but only think what the critics would say about the novelist or dramatist who ventured to put such a story into the form of a romance or a drama! The truth is that—as is so often said—some of the actualities of our everyday life would be set down as utter impossibilities if rendered in the novel or on the stage.

I had many opportunities of observing, also, how a legend which has first come into notice

professedly or confessedly as a legend, and becomes popular, can gradually grow among some of its audiences to be regarded as a genuine recital of historical fact, and become the subject of serious controversy. An appropriate illustration of this curious fact comes back to me now from among my youthful recollections. This came in the form of a legend, then very popular in the south of Ireland, and very likely popular also in other parts of the country, which was the occasion of much admiration, discussion, and controversy among the young men and women of literary tastes with whom I was then closely associated. The legend is peculiarly illustrative of the time, for it has to do altogether with what I may call the profession of highway robbery at that time, still very commonly practised throughout the dominions of Queen Victoria, and in many other countries as well. It seems to me at this stage of my existence somewhat hard to realise the fact that I can remember the time when the business of highway robbery was as familiar a trouble to the law-abiding citizen of these realms as the practice of pocket-picking is at the present day.

The story with which I have to deal told of a beautiful young lady who was engaged to a brilliant and devoted young lover. One day the pair were in the company of a number of friends, and the conversation turned on a

recent adventure which had befallen a young man of good position in the neighbourhood. He had been attacked on an open road, the Queen's highway, in fact, by a solitary horseman, as the romance-writers would have put it, who presented a pistol at him, and imperatively demanded his money or his life. The young man actually carried in his pocket, as solitary horsemen travelling on lonely roads commonly did in those days, a pistol. It seemed to him, however—such was the explanation he afterwards gave—that if he were to attempt any resistance the highwayman would have blown out his brains before he had time to get at the weapon. So he yielded to the conditions, and he handed to his enemy the contents of a well-filled purse, being at the same time conscious of the fact that he held in another pocket a still larger sum of notes and gold which he had obtained for his father at a bank in the nearest town and was bringing home to the paternal residence. The robber, or let us call him the brigand chieftain, was quite content with his spoils, and went his way. The plundered young man was, however, equally content with his share of the adventure, and when he got safely back to his family and his friends, he made quite a boast of the feat he had accomplished in deceiving the enemy and depriving him of the best part of the possible spoils.

Now the group of friends who were talking over

this adventure, and with whom our story is chiefly concerned, was carrying on an animated discussion as to the moral lesson conveyed by the narrative. Most of the company greatly admired the conduct of the young man, his ready wit, his promptness of decision, and the success with which he had escaped the bullet of the robber and carried safely off the greater part of what otherwise must have been the spoils of his lawless assailant. Our young lover, on the other hand, declared himself unable to understand how any man with a pistol in his pocket could submit, without resistance, to such a challenge and tamely make a dishonourable surrender. He protested that he had more than once been attacked on the high road by robbers, and had always found that by producing his loaded pistol and letting them see that his was not the only life in danger, they were ready to leave him and go in quest of some easier prey. His engaged lady love afterwards remonstrated gravely with him on this spirit of reckless daring, and asked him why he had never told her of his willingness thus to risk his own life and her life's happiness by such a deed of derring-do for the sake of a few coins. Then he insisted that it was not for the sake of the few coins but for his own honour as a brave gentleman.

Apparently, as we judge from the remainder of the story, the young lady did not believe

in her lover's account of his own extravagant heroism, and she made up her mind to put his valour to the test. Accordingly, having ascertained that he was about to make one of his lonely rides on the following evening, she ventured on an elaborate scheme of her own. She was a tall young woman, equal in height to many men, and she procured for herself the dress of a cavalier, quite an elegant costume, and had one of her horses fitted with a man's saddle, and she carried in her hand an unloaded pistol, and thus attired rode out under the shades of evening to meet her lover. When she saw him coming she galloped up towards him, and imitating as well as she could the tones of a man's voice, she demanded, according to the regular fashion, his money or his life. Then came the ghastly end of the narrative. The lover as his only reply pulled out his loaded pistol and lodged its bullet in her heart. She fell from her horse, and then her lover leaping from his saddle went to the dead body and discovered in a moment that he had killed the one dearest on the earth to him. By this time some wayfarers had hurried to the spot, but before they could interfere in any way the lover, whose pistol was double-barrelled, had discharged its remaining bullet through his own forehead, and the lovers lay dead side by side.

This was the story over which we were eagerly debating. We had no authentic evidence that

any such terrible tragedy had ever been enacted in real life, but we argued about it as warmly as though it had come within our own actual knowledge. Some of us at once proposed to substitute for its tragic end a version which would come fairly within the realm of bright and happy romance. Our promptly invented version was that the lover should from the very first have recognised his adored one despite her disguise, and that when challenged by her he at once leaped from his horse and called on her to dismount, offering to give her at once all that she could ask from him. So the triumphant girl, proud of her easy victory, descended from her saddle and went to accept her triumph. Then the lover, instead of producing his purse, called her by her name, caught her in his arms, and impressed upon her lips some eager kisses, to which she made impassioned response; and then, to cut the story short, they went home to her home together, and interchanged their explanations, and they were married and lived happy ever after.

Our group of companions, youths and maidens, agreed to produce in poetic form these two versions of the same legend, and one of the young women undertook the tragic while I was entrusted with the production of the comic version. We still remained two opposing groups, but I think that on the whole the happy version was the more successful, and the more popular among

that local society of which we made a part. We read our rival poems in the houses of our more mature friends who had drawing-rooms large enough to make room for a considerable audience, and our performances were among the most successful entertainments of more than one season.

I tell the whole story merely to show what a hold any form of romance, whether in prose or verse, has among the audiences of an obscure little town in our southern Irish country, and how it made us forget for the time all that was going on in the political and commercial movements of the practical world around our homes. I held in my memory for a long time some passages from both versions of our story, but I do not venture to produce them here, because I do not think it would be quite fair to expose our youthful efforts at the poetic to the over-critical judgment of a later and possibly more prosaic criticism on the part of the outer world. We, the young men of that place and of that time, were ourselves very busy in the practical work of our lives. Some of us were studying for the law, some for the medical profession, some were engaged in mere business, and we were all very eager politicians, devoted adherents of the Young Ireland movement or eager supporters of the landlord party, and of what was always represented by the established authorities as the cause of law and order.

OUR RIVERS AND
OUR SEAS

CHAPTER XI

OUR RIVERS AND OUR SEAS

EVEN the poorest classes among the Cork people of my early days had a perfect passion for bathing in the river and in the sea. It was always a matter of much interest to my comrades and me to observe how the very humblest among the lads and lasses of Cork and its neighbourhood contrived to enjoy their favourite pastime without offence to that sense of propriety which was, and is, so characteristic generally even of the least educated of Irish people.

Of course, all the men and women, or shall I say the ladies and gentlemen, of the place were able to enjoy their bathing without any peril to their sense of propriety, just as the ladies and gentlemen of any other place could do. They could have their bathing-machines to carry them into the river or the sea, enable them to make becoming preparation for their descent into the water, and receive them again when the bath and the swim were over. But the poorer classes in and around Cork and Queenstown could not possibly obtain the shelter of a bathing-machine

or a bathing-box, and had to do all their work of dressing and undressing, swimming and scrubbing themselves dry, in the open air, and within sight of any fellow-mortals who might happen just then to be passing along the shore of the sea or the banks of the river.

Now the River Lee was naturally the bathing-place for all classes, rich and poor, high and low, belonging to the city and its neighbourhood. The Lee, if I may be allowed to indulge in such a fancy, appeared to have established for its bathers an unwritten, but universally recognised, set of laws of its own for the thorough maintenance of the proprieties amongst its bathers. That part of the stream which was comparatively near to the city seemed to have been allotted altogether to the classes who could have bathing-boxes and bathing-machines and bathing costumes, and thus were never expected or likely to give any offence to the established principles of propriety.

Higher up the river the young men who only wanted to have a swim, and did not possess or did not care for bathing-machines or bathing-boxes, were accustomed to indulge in their favourite delight. They left their clothing behind them on the river's bank, and after they had enjoyed to the full their much-loved exercise, returned to the bank and there scrubbed themselves dry with rough towels, and then put on

their ordinary habiliments. No women ever went near this part of the river in those early morning hours when the swimming usually took place there, and thus our young friends felt well assured that they were offending no sense of propriety.

Then, at the part of the river still farther away from the city, it was understood that the young women of the poorer classes were to have their share of the stream assigned to them during those morning hours which all classes devoted to the swimmer's pastime. Now I think I may safely say that there was no disposition whatever among the Cork lads to interfere with this privilege assigned to these Cork lasses. We all knew at the time that the girls of the poorer class were there, but I never heard of any rude churl attempting to obtain a sight of these Lady Godivas. I call them Lady Godivas because I believe that most of these poor girls were not able to provide themselves with elaborate bathing-costumes, and could only, like their male relatives, enjoy their swim in the river, then return to the bank, rub themselves dry there, and resume their clothing.

The Lee was certainly a most charming river for those who loved rivers and swimming in rivers. The beauty of its scenery must have infused gleams of the poetic into the minds of all but the dullest and most prosaic who floated

self-impelled along its stream and between its banks and trees, its bordering fields and low-lying hills. I did not myself learn swimming on the Lee. I learned the art first on the noble Blackwater, where I was taught how to keep myself alive in the stream by three athletic cousins of mine. These three cousins were all farther advanced in years than I was, although none of them had yet reached his legal majority. They were all very tall, and the youngest of the three was always humorously spoken of as the little boy of the family, because he had then only reached the height of six feet two, while his brothers were six feet three and six feet four respectively. They were all alike proficient in every sort of manly exercise—riding, swimming, fencing, boxing, the management of boats and yachts, hunting and fishing. The eldest of them entered the army, served in the Indian Mutiny, and was one of the earliest victims on the fatal day at Cawnpore.

From them I first learnt how to swim, and they taught me after a peculiar fashion. They explained to me that the whole art of swimming merely consisted in learning how to keep oneself afloat in the water by an easy movement of the arms and legs ; that it was not necessary to make any strenuous exertion or even any great splash and sputter. The lightest movement of the limbs, they told me, would be

quite enough to keep one's head above the water, if only the body did not struggle to keep itself likewise out of the supposed danger from the rushing stream or the heaving billow, and if the neophyte had his wits about him, and did not get into fuss or flurry, he could keep himself afloat under all ordinary conditions with ease and with safety. So they said that one of them would carry me in his arms into the middle of the river, there launch me, so to speak, in a place where I should be out of my depth, and would then allow me to do the rest for myself, only with the distinct promise that if I should seem to lose my head and to fluster myself into danger they would come to my assistance and give me another chance of retrieving myself and my credit.

Thus instructed and admonished I was well prepared for the experiment. I found, as they had told me, that it is quite easy to keep oneself afloat under ordinary conditions by a comparatively moderate movement of arms and legs, and without struggle or straining of any exhaustive nature. So I soon became a fairly good swimmer, and continued to be more and more conscious of the fact that it takes but a very easy exertion of physical strength to keep oneself afloat and in movement in sea or even in river under any ordinary conditions. Among my many cherished associations with the memory

of these three cousins is the recollection of the manner in which they taught me how to swim. They have all three passed out of life long since.

The Blackwater is indeed not only one of the most beautiful rivers in Ireland or anywhere else, but it is especially hallowed by poetic association. It was beside the Blackwater that Spenser composed his famous “Faerie Queene,” and although Spenser certainly showed no love of the Irish people or sympathies with their struggle against oppression, he has left a tribute to the Blackwater which can never pass out of the world’s memory. I have ever been one of the worshippers of the Blackwater, and I do not know whether I should not have to admit, if I were put to the question on the subject, that it has beauties of scenery which not even the Lee could quite equal. But then the Lee was the river of my youth, was my first love among rivers, and although I have seen many famous rivers in many lands since those early days, yet what man among us is there who is not supposed to cherish the memory of his first love after a fashion which refuses all practical and prosaic comparison with any of the delightful women who may have attracted his attention in his maturer years ?

To return, however, to my early experiences as to the love of my Cork neighbours for the River Lee, and for bathing in its waters, I may say that I had often read, or heard it said in my early

days, that the poorer classes all over Ireland, whether in cities and towns or in country villages, were singularly indifferent to any cleansing processes, and hardly ever thought of using a basinful of water for face or hands, not to say anything of arms and legs and body.

Now, of course, it is certain and unavoidable that the poorest classes everywhere should be unable to provide themselves with baths in their cottages and garrets, or even with any lavish use of soap and towels. But I have always felt well convinced that the Irish poor make better efforts at the maintenance of personal cleanliness than do the poor of most other countries. I do not believe, for example, that the very poor in the slums of great English cities ever attempt or greatly desire any more liberal process of washing than is afforded once or twice a day by a small basin of cold water and a scrap of soap, and that even these luxuries are not always of regular use in all the garrets of the poor.

A curious illustration of the inclination among the Irish poor for the use of the bath is brought to my mind by the recollection of an incident in my very early days. My mother took an active interest in the condition of her poorest neighbours in and around Cork City. I accompanied her often in her visits of this kind. I must have then, if I remember rightly, attained to nearly the mature age of eight years.

One morning she took me to the house of a poor woman who lived in a garret near us. When we had mounted the stairs and reached the door of the humble bedroom my mother knocked and a woman's voice invited her to "come in." So my mother opened the door and entered, and I followed her, and then my mother suddenly tried to close the door behind her before I could get in. In the garret was a woman standing upright in a large tub of water and engaged in splashing herself all over. Thereupon my mother made instant departure, saying she would come back again before long, and hurrying her little boy away with her. When we had got into the street again, my mother told me that this poor woman, who had been keeping herself alive by sheer hard work, was much devoted to habits of cleanliness, and that she never failed to use her tub of cold water every day for the purpose of having a thorough wash, and my mother also told me that she knew many other women of the poverty-stricken class who kept up the same wholesome practice, and who often lent their tubs to impoverished friends, in order that these, too, might be able to keep themselves in cleanly condition.

Now this, of course, is merely anecdote, but I doubt very much whether it could be told with equal fidelity to truth of the poorest quarter of some slum in a great English city. Of course there

are cottages, or at least there were such cottages, in various parts of Ireland where a whole family had to live practically in one room, that one room being enclosed by the four walls of the cottage, and in such homes it would be impossible to expect any habits of personal cleanliness. But even in Irish homes of that kind I feel sure that the elders of the family, if they had a stream or a seashore near to them, would always have been eager for a plunge among the ripples or the waves, and would have taught their children to find enjoyment in the like adventures.

I am afraid it would be difficult to obtain any authentic and accurate returns on such a subject, setting forth to us the relative numerical proportions of the poor in various countries who indulge in the daily luxury of a bath-tub. But if such a return could be obtained with regard to the poor of these countries, obtained, let us say, by a motion in the House of Commons, and with the assent of an energetic and complacent administration, I venture to predict that the poorest classes among my own countrymen and countrywomen would be found to emerge from this peculiar ordeal without any discredit as to their relative position as to habits of personal cleanliness. The House is, I fear, too busy just now for such work.

There comes back to my memory a little anecdote which finds its appropriate place just here. My sister and I and an intimate girl friend

of hers and mine were out early one morning on the river banks rather far from the city, and not near any of the places habitually given up to bathers of either sex, with bathing-boxes or without them. Therefore it was much of a surprise to us as we turned round a corner of the river bank to find that we were approaching a spot where some girls of the poorer class were bathing in the stream or were drying themselves on the bank. I was not the first to become aware of our unconscious intrusion, for I was the one short-sighted member of our trio, and, on the other hand, my girl companions were, I suppose, too much embarrassed by the awkwardness of the situation to make any display of offended propriety.

When I became aware of the actual condition of things it was then rather too late to sound a retreat, and I felt that, as neither of my fair companions had uttered a word, the most becoming way out of the trouble would be to give no note of alarm and pass on as if nothing unusual had come across our way. So we went on, trying to talk composedly, and looking either at each other or down to the ground, while some of the alarmed bathing girls rushed into the water again or clutched at some articles of clothing lying on the bank behind which to shelter themselves from the unexpected pedestrians. Soon we were out of sight of the invaded bathers, and we continued

our walk without uttering a single word to suggest that anything had happened of an unusual kind, but we took good care, although not a word was spoken on the subject, to return to our homes by an entirely different way. We never slackened in our conversation as we moved towards our homes, but we never indulged in a single sentence having to do with any of the health-giving qualifications of the River Lee.

I had some enjoyment and experience of yachting in those days. These opportunities and advantages I derived chiefly through the kindness of my dear employer and friend, John Francis Maguire, who has already appeared more than once in this volume. Maguire was a great yachtsman, and always had a fine and well-fitted yacht of his own—a sailing yacht, of course, as the steam yacht had not yet made much way in the south of Ireland.

Maguire was always most kindly to his friends in giving them opportunities of going about the southern coasts with him in his yachting expeditions, and as Saturday was then a sort of holiday to newspaper folks, I had many an opportunity of enjoying that holiday on board his vessel. He seldom made long expeditions seaward, because he was so much engaged in his own work as the owner and editor of a newspaper, as a public man and a Member of Parliament, and in helping many charitable institutions and

promoting the cause of temperance, that he was not able to allow himself much opportunity for mere recreation. But when he had time for a holiday in a yacht he almost always gave me a chance of sharing with him the delight of such recreation. Thus I came to learn a good deal about the management of the vessel, and about the parts and the shores of southern Ireland.

It has often occurred to me that if Maguire had not been from his early boyhood drawn into political life, he would in all probability have entered the naval service, and might have risen to distinction and rank there. I cannot imagine him for a moment as taken during his early days with any inclination for the life of a soldier, or, I may add, for the life of a sportsman. But during the many years of my association with him in Cork it was made abundantly evident to me that whenever he had a chance of a holiday his immediate impulse was to enjoy that holiday in a yachting expedition or a boating excursion of some kind. He had no inclination for any manner of what is called sport, and I could never think of him as one who found delight in the wounding or killing of birds or hares, or the setting on of hounds to the pursuit of deer. One might, indeed, regard it as possible to conceive of him as aroused to such anger at the depredations and the various mischiefs worked and inflicted by the troublesome

and aggressive fox that he could be prevailed upon to countenance some systematic efforts for the removal of the living nuisance.

Maguire was, in fact, a constitutionally humane mortal, although he never assumed any of the ways of what might be called the professional humanitarian. I do not know that he ever attended a hunt-meeting, and I do not believe that he ever took the slightest interest in races or in the efforts to win money on or by the turf. All this was the more curious because, as I have said already, he was fond of athletic exercises, and was very proud of his own physical strength and activity. I have seen him more than once force his way into the midst of some furious electioneering crowd in order to rescue an unlucky policeman who had, by his over-zeal, exposed himself to the vengeance of some infuriated enemies. The infuriated enemies were sure to be in all, or most, of such cases the supporters of Maguire's own national cause, but Maguire was none the less prompt and resolute to rescue even the over-zealous policeman or policemen from the consequences of an injudicious experiment.

Maguire had a great sense of humour, and I remember that he was once amused and even delighted at the chance misreading which was narrated to him of an announcement made by a not highly educated observer as to the

contents of a newspaper placard exhibited outside the premises of the "Cork Examiner," Maguire's journal. Maguire had a brother who went out on a visit to California at the time when the world was first beginning to be thrilled by the stories of adventures in that gold-bearing region. The "Examiner's" placard displayed an announcement that the paper contained news concerning this adventure. The announcement, however, was compressed into very few words, including the name of the adventurer, and it seemed to puzzle overmuch some working-men of the humblest class, who were engaged in repairing the pavement, and whose curiosity was relieved at last by another working-man, of evidently a more cultured order, who had risen from his task among the paving stones to join with his fellows in their study. He came promptly to their rescue with the information, "Och shure, boys, it only manes that the 'Examiner's' brother is gone out to Foli Carnico!" The expounder had apparently seen that the other Maguire who had gone to the new gold region was a brother of John Francis of that name, and therefore of the "Examiner," and in his eagerness to give a luminous explanation, he had somewhat muddled the name of the region which sheltered the gold mines.

My acquaintanceship, and even my occasional

companionship, with Maguire continued at every possible opportunity for several years after my removal from Cork to Liverpool and then from Liverpool to a final settlement in London. Indeed, his name is closely associated with the most genial recollections of my native country. He was one of the most sincere of friends, the most kindly of employers, the most generous and considerate patron and protector to any young man whom he desired to bring out in the world. Then he had so keen a sense of humour that he could extract the materials for mirth out of the most seemingly commonplace and barren materials. He always seemed to me in himself a sort of living paradox—so amply endowed with physical strength, with restless energy, with enterprising courage, and yet so temperate in all his pleasures, so utterly reluctant to inflict the slightest suffering on humanity or on the mere animal, with a chivalry in many ways as ideal as that of Don Quixote, and yet with a common sense quickened by keen humour which might have supplied Sancho Panza himself with some of his shrewd suggestions. I wrote once, as part of a tribute in the “Cork Examiner” to the memory of two dear friends of mine, that my affections must always cling to that dear old Irish city where John Francis Maguire and Thomas Crosbie lived and lie buried.

Maguire had been a considerable traveller for a time when travel, even among men who had money to spare, seldom went beyond some of the greatest continental capitals. He had seen most of the great cities and the art resorts of Europe, had been in Turkey and in Egypt, and he had made a thorough study of the Irish settlement throughout the United States and Canada, and had followed the Irish emigrant wherever that exile had wandered in search of a quiet and secure home for his industry.

I do not suppose that I ever knew a man more energetically benevolent in the true sense of the word. He was indeed a man of very strong emotions, and in a certain sense even of strong passions. These were not, however, the mere bursts of ill-temper or the mere outgrowth of sensual feelings. I never heard during my close friendly relations with him the slightest rumour which applied to him an indulgence in any other of the sensuous delights—he would seem to have kept as completely away from them as he did from the sensuousness of the wine or whiskey drinker. But he was liable to fits of vehement anger when he heard some account of gross injustice committed with, or without, the sanction of existing law, some mercenary betrayal of a good cause, some injury to the poor and the humble, some exercise of tyrannical power over those who could

not make effective resistance. He might have been a great crusader if only he had lived at the appropriate time, or he might have headed some fiery and desperate charge of Clare's dragoons.

Yet with all these chivalrous qualities he had such an amount of good common sense and sound judgment that he was never so far carried away by the impassioned outburst of Young Ireland as to believe in the possibility of an absolutely undisciplined and practically unarmed concourse of young Irishmen standing up on the battlefield against the well-disciplined and well-armed troops of Queen Victoria. He felt the most thorough admiration for the devotion which William Smith O'Brien displayed to the Irish national cause, and he was a thorough friend and comrade of Thomas Francis Meagher—he visited these and their companions while they were on trial for their lives in Clonmel; but during his whole public career, and since, indeed, he had come to man's estate, he had always persistently and consistently done his very utmost to prevent the outbreak of an armed rebellion, which he felt assured could only end as it actually did come to an end when the armed movement was made. Then he was utterly opposed to any kind of secret conspiracy organised for preparing an insurrection. He knew full well that any such conspiracy would

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come somehow to be made known to the police authorities, and would thus lead to nothing but convictions for conspiracy and imprisonments and transportations. The name of John Francis Maguire deserves, and I trust will find, a lasting place in the history of Ireland.

“ADD AN HONOUR—A GREAT
PATIENCE”

CHAPTER XII

“ ADD AN HONOUR—A GREAT PATIENCE ”

MOST of my Irish readers, whether they be resident in their own country, in Great Britain, in America or Australia, or in whatever other part of the world, will find some early recollections revived within them when the name and the traditions of the Skellig Rocks are brought to their notice. Even those among them who are still quite young, and who could not themselves have seen any of the practical working of these traditions, must have heard from their elders some account of the part the Skelligs played in the history of Cork during recent generations. The Skelligs are islet rocks lying in the sea to the west of Cork County, and the legend went that these islets contained in far distant times a church and a religious community which had some special privileges of their own. One of these privileges was said to have been that for some exceptional reason, marriages could be celebrated at the rock-sustained church at times when the ceremonial could not take place in any other sacred building.

I am speaking now, as my readers will easily understand, of the Catholic Church in Ireland,

for many or most of the Skellig legends go back to a time before Christianity in Europe had divided itself into two separate forms of worship. In the ordinary course no Catholic marriages could be celebrated during Lent, but the legend was that at the church on the Skelligs the nuptial rights could, for some reason or other unknown to me, be performed for some short time after Lent had opened. On this assumption was founded the popular theory, that daring young lovers were constantly devising plans to prevail on their sweethearts to elope with them to the Skellig Rocks after Lent had set in, and when the parents of the enamoured lasses might naturally have no suspicion that the daughters were preparing for any clandestine espousal during the forbidden Lenten period.

Out of this assumption, the assumption that the Skellig Rocks were the favourite region for clandestine marriages, there grew up in the south of Ireland, and especially in the County and City of Cork, the practice of publishing on every Shrove Tuesday a species of songs or ballads called Skellig Lists, and these ditties professed to contain the names of young men and young women, or often, indeed, of elderly men and elderly women, not to say old men and old women, who had eloped together to the Skellig Rocks and secretly got married there. Now these

versified lists did not profess, I need hardly say, to be accurate records of actually accomplished marriages, but were prepared and published as humorous satires, destined to bring into local ridicule the names of unmarried personages who, as their friends and enemies would have it, ought to have got married long before.

The name of Crofton Croker is, I hope, still well remembered, even among English readers. He was at one time very popular in Great Britain, and his “Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland” was read with delight and lavish praise by Sir Walter Scott, and was translated into German by the brothers Grimm. Crofton Croker was born at Cork in 1798, but lived for the most part of his life in London, and died there in August, 1854. Crofton Croker gives us a very full account of the Skellig Lists institution as it flourished in Cork. He tells us that a Cork publisher assured him that in 1836 he printed thirteen separate and entirely different Skellig Lists, and that his average press work was three hundred impressions a day, that this printing fully occupied at least twelve days, and that as in such ballad printing four or five copies were worked off together the produce of the press was about 15,000 lists—facts which show that the Skellig Lists must have enjoyed a very substantial popularity among the inhabitants of the City of Cork, which was not then and is not now a city

quite up to the extent of London or Paris or New York.

Crofton Croker gives us the names of the various lists of that epoch, out of which I only select a few of the most remarkable: “The Aristocratic List,” “The Comet,” “The Cork-screw,” “The Hours of Idleness,” “The Morning Star”—which, I may add, was an anticipation by a good many years of the title once given to a famous London Radical morning paper—“The Pic Nic,” “The Paul Pry,” “The Shrove Tuesday and Spiflicator,” “The Simple Paddy,” “The Tatlers,” and “The Virgins of the Sun.” The supposed fun of the lists consisted in the associating as fugitive lovers bound for the Skelligs now the most seemingly companionable and now the most uncompanionable pairs among well-known citizens of Cork.

In 1838 Croker received from a friend in Cork a letter enclosing a specimen Skellig Lists, and asking him, “Do you remember the local custom of sending all our maids, young and old, accompanied by bachelors of all ages, upon a pilgrimage to Skellig?” The writer went on to say that “the tumult in the streets last Tuesday night was extreme. Bodies of five hundred men and boys paraded the town, blowing horns, firing, ringing the bells of houses, breaking lamps, etc., and all on the occasion of the Skellig Lists.” The printers of these lists

sometimes received summary punishment at the hands of aggrieved bachelors or at those of the fathers or brothers of offended maidens.

At one time, indeed, the Skellig performance went beyond the limit of mere libels in printed sheets. A large body of practical jokers started the theory that it was the duty of philanthropic citizens to convey certain pairs of bachelors and maidens by main force off to the Skellig Islands, there to be married, whether they would or no, in order to compel them to vindicate their reputations by sanctified matrimony. Some most disorderly scenes were created in the public streets by these attempts to convert the humours of the Skellig Lists into more practical jokes through the spectacular display of actual captures and pretended deportations.

When Sir Robert Peel as Home Secretary re-organised the London police force, a measure which led to the reorganisation of the force all through these islands, the magistrates in Cork were compelled to take some steps for the suppression, not only of actual riots in the streets, but also of the libels and scandals contained in the versified Skellig Lists. From that time the Skellig Lists institution began rapidly to decline. The Lists had, in fact, come to be regarded as an unmitigated nuisance, hurtful to a number of inoffensive persons, and by constant repetition ceasing to amuse anybody, and losing popular

favour they lost all chance of support against the measures of the police magistrates. An Irish friend tells me that “the lists were generally very badly put together, the merest doggerel, and without a gleam of real humour, or, indeed, anything clever.”

The existence of the Skellig Lists practice is now, I believe, altogether a thing of the past. But I must say that the humour which showed itself by endeavouring to throw ridicule on the love affairs of other folks continued to be a popular amusement among certain sets in my native city long after the Skellig Lists had come to be only a sort of historical memory. Some sportive friends were always putting into public or private circulation facetious rhymes concerning this or that conceited young man who was supposed to have made himself ridiculous by falling in love with a woman much too good for him, or of some spoilt young woman who believed herself much too beautiful and too gifted to accept the addresses of any young man to be found in the whole circle of her acquaintance. The satire was no doubt very often entirely misapplied, but I suppose there never was a time when the satirical archer always sent his shafts the right way.

I may bring in here some account of an amusing but rather malicious little prank which was played off on me by some of my young com-

panions. A family well known to our set in the city had a pretty daughter—this family, I should say, bore the not very harmonious or poetic name of Flannigan, not even commended or uplifted by the preliminary "O," which would have given a certain tribal dignity to the name.

Eva Flannigan was, as I have said, a decidedly pretty girl, and had many admirers. I did not, however, at any time proclaim myself to be one of these, and I am afraid that I even indulged myself sometimes in malign suggestions that it would be difficult for a youth who had any poetic or musical turn to sing the praises of a maiden bearing the family name of Flannigan. Anyhow, it became suddenly known among our set that the girl had found a well-to-do admirer who was not so easily disconcerted, and who had fallen in love with her, had offered his hand and heart, and had become engaged to her with the full parental approval. Soon after this announcement there appeared in a minor journal of the city which, somewhat like the "Freeholder," gave itself up much to gossip and drolleries, a ballad professing to express the grief of one among Eva Flannigan's now disappointed admirers. I quote here from memory some of its verses :

"Ah! woe is me—I'll never be
The same light-hearted man again.
My heart is broke, and all for thee,
Adorable Miss Flannigan!"

“Oh ! if I wore a warrior’s mail,
I’d seek the battle’s van again !
But if with hope’s light bridge I fail,
Despair’s abyss to span again.

“In wine I oft drowned grief before,
And now I’ll try that plan again,
And strive to think that, as of yore,
Life’s river smoothly ran again !”

Now the point of the joke, so far as I was concerned, consisted in the fact that it was signed by the initials “J. McC.” ; and I think a deliberate touch of added humour was found in the fact that I had long been a devoted member of Father Mathew’s Temperance Organisation, and was thus made to proclaim myself as habitually false to Father Mathew’s great doctrine.

There was nothing to be done on my part. I should only have made myself more ridiculous by writing to disclaim the authorship of the verses ; I should have been asked by the editor of the publication, “Who said you were the author of the poem ? Do you really suppose that you are the one only person in this large city to whom the initials ‘J. McC.’ could possibly apply ?” So my friends and I all thought I had much better make no move whatever to show that I felt any concern in the whole affair, and I abstained from provoking further ridicule by offering to the verses the importance of a personal disclaimer.

The young lady then married and left the city to live with her husband in Dublin, but I long

cherished the fear that some malicious acquaintance must have called her attention to the verses and to their appended signature. It is, indeed, only too probable that the native of any city in the civilised world might be able to enliven his earlier recollections of his birthplace if he were disposed to publish them with some such anecdotes and illustrations of his fellow-citizens as those which I have been collecting to describe the ways of fellow-citizens while I was young. But I am telling my own story, and can only tell what I heard and saw myself, and give it to my readers as characteristic of my own surroundings.

It was the custom in those days that when Irish priests became guests, as they often did, at a dinner-party in Cork City, and I suppose in other cities as well, these reverend gentlemen left the dining-room at the time when the ladies withdrew from it and accompanied the ladies to the drawing-room, where they sat and listened to the music, and whence they did not return to join the male guests below on that occasion. One reason for this habitual arrangement was that the clergymen of the Catholic Church in Ireland did not then indulge in the luxury of smoking, and there was also no doubt that the gentlemen in the dining-room were apt at such a time to make rather free with the champagne or the port or the hot whisky and water, and that the clergymen did not desire to seem as if they

were sanctioning by their presence any such possible excess of conviviality.

I remember that on one occasion, after I had reached the age of recognised manhood and was a frequent guest at dinner parties, I heard a very clever and humorous young lawyer who had just entered on the profession of a solicitor, tell us while the dinner was still going on about an amusing and highly humorous ballad he had lately heard sung which narrated the strange adventures of a fisherman who had discovered a mermaid lying on the edge of a river with only her head and shoulders and arms resting on the bank, while the rest of her figure was concealed by the waves. The fisherman, who was a bachelor, fell madly in love with this fair creature and made up his mind to proclaim his love to her and ask her to become his wife, and then told of his utter disappointment when he found, first that she could not understand a word of his language, and then that she was only a mermaid and not a human creature.

Our friend told us that he had learned to sing the song himself, but that he could only venture to sing it when, as he put it, “the cloth had been removed,” meaning after the reverend gentlemen should have accompanied the ladies to the drawing-room. This explanation was tacitly accepted, and in the ordinary course the clergymen and

the ladies left the room, and we were free to indulge in the usual revelry of drink and song. Our young lawyer friend sang his song and accompanied himself on a piano, and he sang with admirable style and voice, and with much genuine humour. I feel bound to say that there was really nothing in the song which the ladies and the clergymen might not have listened to, beyond the mere fact that the fisherman had realised to his sorrow that the beautiful creature “who should have been fleshy was nothing but fish.” There were no anatomical details, and, indeed, I may observe that the humour of an Irish dinner-party hardly ever then took, and I feel sure hardly ever now takes, that form of jocularity which degenerates into indecency.

I remember also that a little later in my Irish recollections Cork was visited by a number of Catholic priests from the United States, and the Irish priests of Cork were much surprised to find that their American visitors all smoked, while the American priests were equally surprised to find that their Irish brethren in religion permitted themselves to drink wine at a festive gathering. The American priests were all strict teetotallers, while their Irish brethren allowed themselves a moderate use of port or claret or champagne. I must say, however, that the habitude, as it then existed, of the Irish priests generally to abstain from smoking, does not

seem to have had any considerable effect on the Catholic population of Ireland generally with regard to the use of “the weed.” I have never been in any country, even a German land, where the soothing influence of tobacco was more thoroughly appreciated than among most classes of the Irish population, and more especially of the poorest classes, in those days of my early youth. I have had quite lately an especial reason for going back upon my early observation of the genial tobacco plant.

The recent financial proposals of the Liberal administration under Mr. Asquith’s leadership contained a project which at once recalled to my mind some early memories of Ireland. This was the proposal for the imposition of a special tax on tobacco. My mind was instantly carried back to the place which tobacco held in my early days, and I presume still holds among the few, the very few, influences for the promotion of comfort and even happiness among the Irish peasantry, and, indeed, among all the poorer classes in Ireland. Now, I hardly think it necessary to enter into elaborate argument in order to show that the habit of tobacco smoking is not to be regarded as if it belonged to the same order as the habit of drinking whiskey or brandy or gin, or, indeed, any manner of intoxicating drink. We all know the evils which come from excessive indulgence in such drinks, and we all

know too how frequent a calamity it is that moderate indulgence is gradually converted into excessive indulgence, and that excessive indulgence means ruin to mind and body alike. But we never heard of the indulgence in smoking leading any classes of persons into shame and sin and crime and ruin.

In the Ireland of my younger days, the tobacco pipe seemed to be the one sole luxury of the poor Irishman and, let me add, even more especially of the poor Irishwoman. Wherever you went in the country villages of Ireland or in the poorer quarters of its cities and towns, you were sure to see the old Irishwoman at her cottage door in the evening hour, refreshing herself after her toils of the day with the tobacco pipe, which she held between her lips, and which seemed to be a magical influence withdrawing her for the time from the troubles of life. Sometimes it was a mother with her little children around her ; often it was a venerable dame, a grandmother very like, with little beings playing around her knees while she inhaled the soothing smoke from the short clay pipe. I have often remained a gratified observer of some such dear old person, as she leaned back on her stool with her shoulders pressed against the adjacent wall and her eyes half closed, as if in a state of reverie, while she enjoyed to the full the beneficent influence that came on her directly from her pipe and floated

backwards on her from the smoke-wreaths of the tobacco.

I should say that during all those years which I am now recalling to memory, the tobacco plant was absolutely unknown as the source of personal enjoyment to any women in Ireland who did not belong to Ireland's poorest classes. Even the most intrepid and venturesome of women, young or old, who belonged to what is called society, never ventured on the smoking of a cigar or would have attempted even a cigarette if the cigarette had then been an institution, while the idea of a woman who belonged to what are called the better classes venturing on the puffing of a clay pipe was an idea beyond the stretch of the most scandalous imagination. At a later period I had been accustomed to meet with adventurous women in London who won for themselves a sort of social celebrity by smoking cigarettes and even cigars, and were still received within the precincts of fashion—it is now, of course, too usual to attract attention. But there never has been, so far as I could learn, any set of women audacious enough to train themselves to the use of the clay pipe, or even of the German “meerschaum.”

I do not believe that the use of tobacco in any form was ever adopted in Ireland by any women who did not belong, as I have said already, to the poorest among the peasantry and the artisans. Among these classes, however, the

elder women, the mothers and aunts and grandmothers, still, I believe, indulge in the cheering influence of a tobacco pipe, but at no time within my recollection did the younger women of Ireland, the unmarried daughters and nieces, and the younger lasses of all kinds, ever get into the way of solacing themselves by the use of tobacco. I could not help turning over these thoughts in my mind when I read about the proposals of Mr. Asquith's Government to obtain a new source of revenue by imposing a tax upon tobacco. Such a tax must tell heavily upon all the poorer classes in England, Scotland, and Wales, but it must tell much more heavily still upon the poorer classes in Ireland.

I can well remember how often it occurred to my mind as I watched some of my elderly countrywomen smoking, with such peaceful steadiness, their short pipes, that the whole attitude and demeanour of one of these women might be taken as a sort of living human allegory of Ireland's own national gift of patience. Now, patience is not exactly a quality which is generally regarded as especially typical of the Irish nationality. We Irish are usually set down by other peoples, and not uncommonly even by our own people, as especially impatient, and in every sense remarkably demonstrative. We are noisy in our mirth, we are boisterous in our festivities, we knock down our friends for the fun of the

thing, we cannot hold a public meeting without making it end in a fight, and so on through all the doings of our daily lives. Such is the Irishman of the comic stage and of the humorous novel, even when, or perhaps especially when, the drama and the story are the work of Irish authors, and such is the Irishman of political and public life generally as he is habitually depicted by the British Press.

Now, I still venture to think and to contend that, even although our unfriendly critics may be able to find individual cases which bear out some of their allegations and accusations, there is yet, and has ever been among the people of Ireland, a quality of patience often very marvellous under conditions most trying to such a mood of mind. Ireland was, during many generations, one of the most suffering and, I venture to say also, one of the most patiently suffering countries in the whole civilised world, not to go back beyond the range of mediæval history. There came, indeed, a rebellion now and a rebellion then, but the rebellions were very few when compared with what might have been expected from an admittedly brave people suffering under a sort of rule which was hardly one degree better than that of slave-masters over a race of slaves.

But to leave far distant days and political questions entirely out of our consideration, I still maintain that Ireland has, during recent genera-

tions, been a wonder of patience under all her trials. We all know how the Irish peasantry were treated until quite recent times, and although we used to read every now and then of some crime committed against landlord or agent, we who lived in Ireland knew what masses of the Irish peasantry there were who, with their wives and families, were dragging out life on the very verge of starvation, and tried to be not only patient, but even cheerful and helpful to their equally suffering friends and neighbours.

I have known myself of many and many a peasant family whose whole lives had been passed in what must have seemed to any outer observer the very extreme of poverty and misery, and who yet lived a life of honest although futile industry, of family affection, of unfailing attention to religious duties, and of kindly companionship with all their fellows in distress. I have known humble homes in Irish cities where the head of the family had brought himself and his wife and children to extreme poverty by his intemperance, and where, nevertheless, the wife and children did their very best by the efforts of mere affection to win him back into better ways, and to keep as far as they possibly could from the knowledge of his neighbours and of the outer world generally all evidence of the source from which their descent into utter poverty was coming.

It is not, however, on these exceptional instances that I would chiefly rely in support of my general proposition. I still contend that through all the vicissitudes of political and territorial struggle in Ireland, the Irish Celt maintained as one of his leading characteristics the quality of cheerful, hopeful patience. The villages ever kept up their relish for music; the poorest inmates of city slums whistled or sang as they went to their daily work and returned from it, and often, when such artistic tastes were allowed an opportunity of expression, even while getting through that work.

Now, it will naturally be said and thought by many of my readers that I am a rather prejudiced witness, when I thus offer my testimony to the merits of my own people. But I may be allowed to say on my own behalf, that I left my country very soon after my growth to the age of recognised manhood, that I have lived by far the greater part of my life in England, and have travelled much and studied the ways of many foreign peoples, and have had by my travels ample opportunities of observing the national characteristics of peoples who have nothing to do with the Celtic race. Moreover, I am now looking back to my own early recollections for the impressions engraven thereupon of Ireland and her people as I made them a study at the time.

I fully believe also, from my observations made

during far more recent days, that the public opinion of England herself is already coming round to a recognition of the fact that this very quality of patience is a characteristic of the Irish race, and that the troubles which British governments until quite recently kept incessantly decreeing for the Irish population would have been borne by few other peoples with so much of forbearance and self-restraint. The conquered at last won over their conquerors, and many of the great Englishmen in Parliament and outside it who have during recent years been won to the national cause and claims of Ireland, have borne their public and willing testimony to the patience with which Ireland has waited for the dawn of that day when her rights should be recognised by England.

THE END

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